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NAVAL STAFF HISTORY
SECOND WORLD WAR

Battle Summary No. 17

NAVAL OPERATIONS OF THE CAMPAIGN IN NORWAY

1951

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Sea Power Centre – Australia
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AMENDMENTS.

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NAVAL STAFF HISTORY
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APRIL—JUNE 1940

B.R. 1736 (10) dated 1943 and B.R. 1736 (10) (1) dated 1947 are hereby superseded and all copies are to be destroyed in accordance with B.R. 1

This book is based on information available up to and including March 1950

T.S.D. 57/50

HISTORICAL SECTION
NAVAL STAFF
ADMIRALTY

Foreword

BATTLE SUMMARY No. 17, 'The Conjunct Expeditions to Norway', was originally written in 1942. It was then, as its title implies, mainly concerned with the landings and inshore operations, with the result that the interesting and instructive Fleet operations of the campaign were not adequately dealt with. Much information about enemy plans and movements, too, has become available from the documents captured at the end of the war.

In the present edition, re-named 'Naval Operations of the Campaign in Norway', emphasis has been laid on the deep sea operations rather than on the amphibious operations on the Norwegian coast. Chapters I and II, dealing with the operations of the Home Fleet from the time of the initial German landings to the arrival in Norway of the Allied expeditionary forces, and Chapter III, dealing with the Allied plans and the general employment of naval forces during the campaign, have been entirely re-written.

In Chapters IV to X, tracing the individual fortunes of the various landings and withdrawals, the original version has been adhered to as closely as possible, but it has been amplified, and where necessary amended in the light of information derived from German and other sources which have now become available ; and the subject matter has been re-arranged, in order to conform with chronology.

Chapter XI—Comment and Reflections—is entirely new.

Plans have been produced illustrating initial submarine and U-boat dispositions, and the approximate movements of surface forces during the opening phase of the campaign and the final withdrawal from Narvik.

March, 1950

(C34469) B2

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.	Anti-aircraft.
A/S	Anti-submarine.
A.S.I.S.	Ammunition Store Issuing Ship.
A.T.	Admiralty telegram.
A.C.N.S.	Assistant Chief of Naval Staff.
C.O.	Commanding Officer.
C.S.	Cruiser Squadron.
D.C.N.S.	Deputy Chief of Naval Staff.
M.N.B.D.O.	Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation.
O.R.P.	Polish Ship.
S.N.O.	Senior Naval Officer.
T.S.D.S.	Two-speed destroyer sweep.

TIME

Zone minus 1 (B.S.T.) is used throughout.

Introduction

ON THE 9th April 1940 Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. Denmark fell in a day and within 48 hours all the airfields and the principal seaports in Norway were in the hands of the invaders. No warning had been given to her victims, though rumours and various pieces of intelligence had pointed to some such development ; still less did a *casus belli* exist, especially with Norway, with whom, indeed, there was a traditional friendship of many years standing. The treachery of the proceeding was only equalled by its success.

From the start it was apparent that little could be done by the Allies in the face of German air superiority in the south ; but expeditions were hastily organised in an attempt to dislodge them from central and northern Norway. The former speedily failed ; but the northern expedition had more success and eventually re-took Narvik. By that time, however, events elsewhere had moved too swiftly ; the Low Countries had been overrun, France, beaten to her knees, was about to sue for armistice, and to many invasion seemed to stare the United Kingdom in the face.[1] The decision was taken to abandon Norway.

This battle summary deals with the naval side of the operations of the campaign in Norway. The services of the land and air forces are only touched on in it so far as is necessary to explain the naval movements and operations.

The campaign fell into two well-defined phases, viz. :—

Phase 1

From 7th April, when German invasion forces were first reported at sea, to 14th April, when the Allied counter-offensive in Norway was about to develop. During this period the Allied naval effort was chiefly concentrated on bringing to action the enemy naval forces employed on the operation. These efforts met with varying success, but the German heavy units, with the exception of the 8-in. cruiser *Blücher*, which was sunk by the Norwegian coastal defences, were all back in German ports by the 14th.

Phase 2

The Allied counter-offensive, from 14th April when the first flights of the expeditionary forces were reaching the coasts of Norway, to 14th June, when the last return convoys reached United Kingdom ports. Throughout this phase the Navy's part was chiefly the business of carrying troops and stores to Norway and home again, with some service inshore in support of the advance on Narvik, and the anti-aircraft protection of the temporary bases at Namsos and Aandalsnes.

In studying the story of what Mr. Winston Churchill describes as this ' ramshackle campaign ', it must be remembered that the events recorded took place under circumstances very different from those obtaining at the end of the war.

---

[1] The Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, never considered invasion possible under the conditions existing at any time in 1940.

The campaign was the first major clash in history in which all three arms—'sea, land and air'—were involved. Such knowledge as existed of the potentialities of air attacks on ships and the most effective counter-measures was largely theoretical; radar was still in its infancy; and the experience derived from the remarkable series of amphibious operations which characterised the Allied strategy from the landings at Diego Suarez in 1942 to the end of the war was as yet undreamed of.

The British, too, in those early days, were still paying the penalty of the pre-war policy of 'appeasement' and the consequent unreadiness for war when it came; many months were to elapse before deficiencies both in trained personnel and material of all kinds could be made good. In a word, measures which could, and probably would have been readily undertaken five years later, could not be contemplated at the time the campaign was fought.

The events which led up to the campaign in Norway centred on the great importance, both economic and strategic, of Scandinavia to Germany.

The 1938 statistics showed an annual consumption by Germany of seventeen million tons of pure iron, six and a half million tons of which came from sources which the Allied blockade had already cut off, and six million tons from Sweden. If this latter supply could be denied to her or seriously impaired, it seemed she could not long continue the war. In summer most of it was shipped from the Swedish port of Lulea, in the Gulf of Bothnia; but in winter this port was ice-bound, and the route then taken was from Narvik and Kirkenes down the coast of Norway. Here, it appeared to the Allies, was a golden opportunity for their superior sea power to strike a serious blow at a vital war commodity;[1] but the whole 1,000-mile passage could be made in Norwegian territorial waters and interference with the traffic would involve the technical infringement of Norwegian neutrality.

It was an intolerable situation that the Allies should be thus shackled by their own scrupulous observance of the letter of that International Law which the Germans notoriously set at nought and outraged whenever it suited them; and as early as 19th September 1939 the First Lord of the Admiralty[2] had called the attention of the Cabinet to the matter.[3] From then on throughout the winter he strove to obtain approval to force the traffic outside territorial waters, by laying minefields—which would be duly declared—in suitable positions off the Norwegian coast.

The Germans were of course fully aware of the importance of the iron ore to them, but they were confident that arrangements could be made with Sweden, such as a given winter storage at Lulea and, if necessary, transport of the ore by rail to the south, whereby all their needs could be supplied.[4] Meanwhile they were content to rely on Allied respect for international law to protect the traffic on its normal winter route, and decided that at the outset a neutral Norway would be to their advantage. Before many weeks, however, Grand Admiral Raeder, the commander-in-chief of the German Navy and probably the ablest strategist of all the German war leaders, was casting covetous eyes

[1] Actually, this view under-estimated the importance of scrap iron to the German war economy, and it exaggerated the difference which the stoppage of the Narvik route alone would make to the overall importation from Sweden.

[2] The Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, C.H., M.P.

[3] Churchill, THE SECOND WORLD WAR, Vol. I, p. 421 (English Edition).

[4] In January 1940 the Swedish Foreign Minister informed the Norwegians privately that it was 'technically possible' to export 90 per cent of the iron via the Baltic.

on the Norwegian coast,[1] and on 3rd October 1939 he called the attention of the Führer to the desirability of gaining bases there ; this he followed up a week later with definite suggestions for the occupation of that country.

At about the same time, there were indications of increased cordiality between Great Britain and Norway. An Allied footing there[2] would not only menace the iron ore, but might, under certain contingencies, open the ' back door ' to the Baltic, with its relatively undefended German seaboard.

The Russian invasion of Finland (30th November) and the proposal of the Allies to send aid to the hard pressed Finns, who could only be reached through Scandinavian ports, seemed to present an opportunity for them to obtain just such a foothold as the Germans most wished to avoid. This caused serious alarm in Berlin. Contact was established with the Norwegian traitor Quisling and on 14th December Hitler ordered the Supreme Command to prepare plans for the invasion of Norway and Denmark.

Planning continued throughout the winter, and on 16th March 1940—though the Russo-Finnish peace treaty just concluded (12th March) had removed the immediate cause of anxiety—Hitler decided that the operation, which was known as ' Weserübung ', should take place about a month before his projected invasion of France and the Low Countries, and fixed 9th April as D-day.[3]

It so happened that towards the end of March Mr. Churchill's representations at last bore fruit and the Allied Governments decided to lay mines off the coast of Norway, in order to ' force traffic outside Norwegian territorial waters '. All possible consideration was to be shown for Norwegian susceptibilities, but it was realised that this step was not unlikely to provoke the Germans to violate Norwegian neutrality and it was therefore decided to hold troops in readiness to land at Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim and Narvik, should there be clear evidence of their intention to do so. The date chosen for laying the first minefield was 5th April ; this was subsequently altered to the 8th.[4]

Thus it came about that each of the belligerents independently was initiating operations scheduled to take place in neutral Norway within the same 24 hours, a sufficiently intriguing situation, though the scope and method of their plans were very different.

---

[1] The German Admiral Wegener, in his book published in 1929, SEA STRATEGY OF THE WORLD WAR, had stressed the strategic advantages that would accrue to the German Navy from the possession of the coast of Norway. No doubt Admiral Raeder was familiar with this work.

[2] This was precisely what the Allies were most desirous of obtaining by diplomatic methods, which, however, received scant encouragement from the Scandinavian Governments.

[3] It is probable that the *Altmark* incident, when on 16th February Captain Vian in the *Cossack* demonstrated that there was a limit to Great Britain's patience and that under certain circumstances she was prepared to violate Norwegian neutrality, played its part in producing this decision.

[4] Had the original date been adhered to, it is probable that the Norwegians would have been more on the *qui vive* on 9th April.

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY EVENTS

1. German plan of invasion [PLAN 2

The German plan of invasion hinged on surprise and was characterised by admirable staff work. Seven army divisions under the command of General von Falkenhorst were employed,[1] three in the assault phase, and four in the follow-up. Some eight hundred operational aircraft and between two and three hundred transport planes supplemented the initial seaborne landings, which were planned to take place simultaneously at Oslo, Arendal, Kristiansand (south) and Egersund, Bergen, Trondheim and Narvik.

The whole available German naval strength was to be used in support of this bold operation, undertaken without command of the sea (except as regards the Kattegat and Skagerrak) in the face of very superior Allied naval forces ;[2] the latter, it was rightly judged, could be largely neutralised by surprise in the first place and later by air forces operating from captured Norwegian airports. So far as the naval side of the operation was concerned, it was considered that the greatest difficulty and risk would lie in the return of the naval units to Germany after the landings were completed.

On 6th March 1940 Grand Admiral Raeder issued the directive outlining the naval part in the invasion. The forces allocated to Norway were organised in six groups, Groups 1 and 2 operating in the north and the remaining four groups in the south, as shown in the following table :—

GROUP	TASK
GROUP 1. Commanded by Vice-Admiral Lütjens[3]	
BATTLECRUISERS	
Gneisenau (Flag) *Scharnhorst*	To act as covering force for the whole operation, sailing with main landing forces. Having reached the line Shetlands–Bergen, to create a diversion in company with Group 2 in the North Sea ; then to patrol in the southern part of the Arctic and after completion of the landings to cover the return of the other naval units to Germany.

[1] One for Denmark, six for Norway.

[2] The risks were soberly assessed and accepted by Grand Admiral Raeder. ". . . The operation in itself is contrary to all principles in the theory of naval warfare. According to this theory it could be carried out by us only if we had naval supremacy. We do not have this ; on the contrary we are carrying out the operation in face of the vastly superior British Fleet. In spite of this, the Commander-in-Chief, Navy, believes that, provided surprise is complete, our troops can and will successfully be transported to Norway.

On many occasions in the history of war those very operations have been successful which went against all the principles of warfare, provided they were carried out by surprise. . . ."—Report of Commander-in-Chief, Navy, to Führer dated 9th March 1940.

Actually, no principle was contravened, since the plan involved no invasion *by sea*, except across the Skagerrak, where they exercised local command. North of Bergen the operation was of the nature of synchronised raids. No seaborne follow-up was contemplated, reliance for this being placed on the air, of which they had full control, and the advance of the army overland from Oslo.

[3] Deputy Commander-in-Chief. The Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Marschall, was sick.

GROUP	TASK
DESTROYERS	
Wilhelm Heidkamp (S.O.)	Under Commodore Bonte, to effect occupation of Narvik, involving the landing of 2000 men under General Dietl, and then to rejoin the battlecruisers.
Anton Schmitt	
Diether von Roeder	
Hans Lüdemann	
Hermann Künne	
Georg Thiele	
Bernd Von Arnim	
Wolfgang Zenker	
Erich Giese	
Erich Koellner	

GROUP 2. Commanded by Captain Heye, C.O. *Hipper*

8-IN. CRUISER	
Hipper	Occupation of Trondheim, involving the landing of about 1700 men, after which to rejoin the battlecruisers.
DESTROYERS	
Friedrich Eckholdt	
Theodor Riedel	
Bruno Heinemann	
Paul Jacobi	

GROUP 3. Commanded by F.O. Scouting Forces, Rear-Admiral Schmundt

(*a*) LIGHT CRUISERS	
Köln	Occupation of Bergen, involving the landing of 1,900 men.
Königsberg	
Bremse	
1st E-boat Flotilla (7)	
(*b*) Commanded by S.O. 6th T.B. Flotilla	
TORPEDO BOATS	
Leopard	
Wolf	
DEPOT SHIP	
Karl Peters	

GROUP 4. Commanded by Captain Rieve, C.O. *Karlsruhe*

LIGHT CRUISER	
Karlsruhe	Occupation of Kristiansand and Arendal, involving the landing of about 1100 men.
DEPOT SHIP	
Tsingtau	
TORPEDO BOATS	
Luchs	
Seeadler	
Greif	
2nd E-boat Flotilla (7)	

GROUP 5. Commanded by Rear-Admiral Kummetz

8-IN. CRUISER	Occupation of Oslo, involving the landing of about 2000 men.
Blücher (Flag)	
POCKET BATTLESHIP	
Lützow	
LIGHT CRUISER	
Emden	

GROUP	TASK
TORPEDO BOATS	
Möwe	
Albatros	
Kondor	
1st R-boat Flotilla (8)	
2 Whale Boats	

GROUP 6. Commanded by S.O., 2nd Minesweeping Flotilla

4 Minesweepers	Occupation of cable station at Ekersund, involving the landing of 150 men.

The following measures were ordered as protection for the operation :—

(1) The battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, later to be joined by the *Hipper*, were to patrol the southern part of the Arctic.

(2) Twenty-eight U-boats to be disposed in suitable areas, stretching from Narvik and the Shetlands down to the Skagerrak and Eastern Approaches to the English Channel.

(3) A minefield to be laid in the Skagerrak on the day of the initial landings, and other fields to be declared off the west coast of Norway.[1]

(4) Air reconnaissance and protection during daylight.

(5) Anti-submarine patrols in the Kattegat, Skagerrak and further westward.

The invasion of Denmark, which was to take place simultaneously, was also provided for in the naval plan. A group which included the old battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* was to land a force to occupy Korsör (1840 men) and Nyborg (150 men) in the Great Belt ; and four other groups, consisting of small craft, were charged with the occupation of Copenhagen (1000 men), the Little Belt bridge, by Middelfart (400 men), and other key points on the Danish coast.

The immediate follow-up for Bergen and the ports to the southward (including Copenhagen) was to be embarked in transports,[2] disguised as ordinary merchant ships, and sailed singly so as to arrive at their destinations shortly after the assault forces. Troops were not to be sent to Narvik and Trondheim by transports owing to the risk of interception on the Shetlands–Stadlandet line ; but six steamers camouflaged as ordinary merchant ships and loaded with military stores were to be despatched to these northern ports (three to each) timed to arrive before the warships,[3] and arrangements were made for two tankers to arrive at Narvik and one at Trondheim to fuel the naval units.[4]

Further reinforcement and the build-up was to be carried out by the 2nd Sea Transport Division (11 ships totalling 52,500 G.R.T.) and the 3rd Sea Transport Division (12 ships totalling 74,550 G.R.T.) working back and forth between Oslo and German ports.

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[1] It had been intended that aircraft should lay mines in Scapa Flow, to hamper the movements of the Home Fleet, and this operation had been arranged to start on 28th March, when it was cancelled on the 27th by Reichs Marshal Goering without reference to the Naval Authorities, much to Admiral Raeder's annoyance.

[2] The 1st Sea Transport Division consisting of 15 ships with a total of 72,000 G.R.T., carrying 3761 troops, 672 horses, 1377 vehicles and 5935 tons of Army stores.

[3] For Narvik, the *Rauenfels*, *Alster* and *Barenfels* ; for Trondheim, the *Sao Paulo*, *Main* and *Levante*. As things turned out, of these ships the *Levante* alone reached her destination and she was three days late. (*See* Sec. 21 *postea*.)

[4] The *Jan Wellem* and *Kattegat* for Narvik and the *Skagerrak* for Trondheim. Only the *Jan Wellem* (from Murmansk) reached her destination. (*See* Sec. 21 *postea*.)

2. The British Minefield and Plan R.4 [PLAN 1

During the first week of April 1940, while the final German preparations were taking place, the Allies were going forward with their plans for interrupting the ore traffic. The operations, naturally, would be covered by the Home Fleet,[1] based on Scapa Flow and commanded by Admiral Sir Charles Forbes.

It was decided that three areas should be declared dangerous, one off the eastern shore of Vest Fjord, in about 67° 30′ N., 14° E.; another off Bud, about 63° N., 7° E., and a third off Stadtlandet, about 62° N., 5° E. Destroyers of the 20th (Minelaying) Flotilla under Captain Bickford were to lay the field in Vest Fjord and the minelayer *Teviot Bank* (Commander King-Harman) that off Stadtlandet, the date for laying being 8th April. No mines were to be actually laid off Bud. All three areas however were to be declared dangerous as soon as the first mines were laid, but not before, in order to reduce the chance of meeting Norwegian ships of war whilst laying; for it was known that Norway would use force to prevent the violation of her neutrality. Indeed, although the Allies considered it essential to lay one minefield, they decided that 'the laying of a second one should be given up rather than have an incident with a Norwegian patrol vessel'.

As already mentioned, the Allies had decided to hold troops ready to occupy the ports of Stavanger, Bergen and Trondheim, and ready to land at Narvik, but they did not intend to land troops in Norway 'until the Germans have violated Norwegian neutrality, or there is clear evidence that they intend to do so'. These measures were known as Plan 'R.4'.

The troops for Stavanger and Bergen, two battalions each, were to sail in cruisers, while a single battalion for Trondheim sailed in a transport, arriving two days later than the others. For Narvik the expedition was planned on a larger scale. There the initial landing was to be carried out by one battalion, which was to sail in a transport accompanied by two cruisers, all under Admiral Sir Edward Evans; these were to be followed by an oiler, by the rest of a British Brigade, and later by some French troops—a total strength of about 18,000 men. The port was then to become a regular base with its local defence forces and fuel supplies.

A striking force consisting of two cruisers and three destroyers under Vice-Admiral Sir George Edward-Collins, 2nd Cruiser Squadron, was to be held in readiness at Rosyth 'to deal with any seaborne expedition the Germans may send against Norway'; and the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, earmarked three ships of the 18th Cruiser Squadron, under Vice-Admiral Layton, as a striking force from Scapa, though these ships were to continue the service they were employed on in support of the Norwegian convoys until required.

Big ship cover was to be provided by the *Rodney*, *Valiant*, *Renown* and *Repulse*, screened by 10 destroyers. It is to be noted that these operations would have to be undertaken without an aircraft carrier, since the Home Fleet did not possess one, though Germany was at that time the only Power with which we were at war.[2]

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[1] *See* Appendix A.

[2] The *Ark Royal* and *Glorious* were in the Mediterranean in order to carry out essential training. The *Furious*, though belonging to the Home Fleet, had been refitting at Devonport, and was then at the Clyde, but was not yet fully operationally fit.

3. Preparations and movements, 4th–7th April 1940 [PLAN 2

On 3rd April the Cabinet took the final decision to proceed with the mine-laying and on the following day Admiral Evans hoisted his flag in the cruiser *Aurora* at the Clyde, where the force for Narvik was to start its voyage, with orders to be ready to sail on the 8th. The other cruiser for Narvik, the *Penelope*, left a Norwegian convoy she was protecting and arrived at Scapa on the 6th.

The ships for Stavanger and Bergen assembled in the Forth under Vice-Admiral John Cunningham, 1st Cruiser Squadron, and the troops and stores were embarked in the *Devonshire, Berwick, York* and *Glasgow* on the 7th.

The *Teviot Bank* escorted by four destroyers[1] of the 3rd Flotilla under Captain Todd (Capt. (D) 3) left Scapa on 5th April to lay the minefield off Stadtlandet. Since reports indicated that the four heaviest ships of the Norwegian Navy—vessels of some 4000 tons, 40 years old, each mounting two 8-in. guns—might all be in a position to interrupt the laying of mines in Vest Fjord, the Commander-in-Chief decided to send Vice-Admiral Whitworth in the *Renown* with a screen of destroyers[2] to support the northern minelayers; the *Birmingham* and a couple of destroyers,[3] then cruising to the northward against a German fishing fleet, were to join his flag off the coast of Norway. Admiral Whitworth sailed from Scapa in the evening of 5th April, and next morning was joined by Captain Bickford with four minelayers[4] of the 20th Destroyer Flotilla and Captain Warburton-Lee with four[5] of the 2nd Flotilla, which were to escort the minelayers and subsequently to patrol off the minefield. One of the *Renown's* screen, the *Glowworm*, soon parted company; she stopped to pick up a man fallen overboard. In the thick and blowing weather she lost the squadron, and two days later, meeting a superior force of the enemy she was overwhelmed. Two other destroyers, the *Hyperion* and *Hero*, were sent back for oil, after which they were to pretend to lay the minefield off Bud. With his screen thus depleted, Admiral Whitworth continued his passage intending to meet the *Birmingham* and her destroyers off Vest Fjord in the evening of the 7th.

Meanwhile, the Germans had started embarking troops on the 6th and the first of their groups—those bound for Narvik and Trondheim—left their home waters late that night.

4. German Fleet reported at sea, 7th April [PLAN 2

At 0848, 7th April, a reconnaissance aircraft reported a cruiser and two destroyers in 55° 30′ N., 6° 37′ E. (about 150 miles south of the Naze), steering to the northward. This message reached the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet —then at Scapa Flow—at 1120; half an hour later he received a message from the Commander-in-Chief, Rosyth (timed 1120), stating that the cruiser was probably *Nürnberg* Class, with *six* destroyers,[6] and that 23 Wellingtons and 12 Blenheims were leaving at 1115 and 1150 to bomb the enemy.

[1] *Inglefield, Ilex, Isis, Imogen.*

[2] *Greyhound, Glowworm, Hyperion, Hero.*

[3] *Hostile, Fearless.*

[4] *Esk, Impulsive, Icarus, Ivanhoe.*

[5] *Hardy, Hotspur, Havock, Hunter.*

[6] They were escorted by eight aircraft which drove away the British shadower.

A further signal from the Commander-in-Chief, Rosyth (timed 1352) arrived at 1400 : aircraft had reported three enemy destroyers in 56° 06′ N., 6° 08′ E. at 1315. Their course was given as 190°, 12 knots ; it looked as though they were homeward bound.

Twenty minutes later (1420) a message from the Admiralty (A.T. 1259/7) came in :—

> " Recent reports suggest a German expedition is being prepared. Hitler is reported from Copenhagen to have ordered unostentatious movement of one division in ten ships by night to land at Narvik, with simultaneous occupation of Jutland. Sweden to be left alone. Moderates said to be opposing the plan. Date given for arrival at Narvik was 8th April."
>
> All these reports are of doubtful value and may well be only a further move in the war of nerves. Great Belt opened for traffic 5th April.[1]

On receipt of this message, Sir Charles Forbes ordered the fleet to go to one hour's notice for steam. Three hours elapsed.

Then, at 1727, arrived another message from the Admiralty (A.T. 1720) : at 1325 an aircraft had sighted two cruisers, one large ship (possibly *Scharnhorst* Class) and 10 destroyers in 56° 48′ N., 6° 10′ E., steering 320°.[2] This was the first indication of enemy heavy ships being at sea to reach the Commander-in-Chief. He had already ordered certain cruiser and destroyer movements[3] on the strength of the earlier reports, and on receipt of this latter signal[4] he at once ordered all ships at Scapa to raise steam. At 2015, 7th April, the heavy ships of the Home Fleet sailed from Scapa ; the Rosyth striking force sailed an hour later.

The report of the enemy fleet being at sea decided the Admiralty to give up the minefield off Stadtlandet, and the *Teviot Bank* was recalled ; no change was made in the plan for laying the mines in Vest Fjord.

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[1] The Commander-in-Chief subsequently remarked that in the light of later events ' it was unfortunate that the last paragraph was included '.

There had been various indications that some large scale naval operation was afoot ; after the second week in March, all U-boat activities against the trade routes had abruptly ceased, pointing to their employment elsewhere ; U-boat and destroyer minelaying was also suspended ; Germany's two capital ships, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, had been seen in Wilhelmshavn roads on the 4th April, and German wireless from that port had been unusually active since the evening of the 6th. Several aircraft reported intense activity during the night 6th/7th April in Kiel and Eckenforde, Hamburg and Lubeck, with wharves brilliantly lighted by arc lamps, and much motor traffic with unshaded headlights. Cumulatively, this intelligence pointed in one direction, as can be clearly seen now ; but unfortunately at the time it was wrongly assessed.

[2] The two German forces reported at 0848 and 1325 were almost certainly the same force, consisting of the *Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, Hipper* and 12 destroyers. They had left port in two groups shortly before midnight 6th April and joined up at 0300, 7th. The positions in which the British aircraft reported them correspond closely to their own reckoning at the time, though the German ships sighted no hostile aircraft till 1330.

[3] At 1546, four destroyers nearing Rosyth with Convoy H.N.24 were ordered to complete with fuel on arrival and to keep steam. At 1558, the *Sheffield* and four destroyers were ordered to raise steam ; and at 1607, Vice-Admiral Edward-Collins was ordered to proceed, as soon as the four destroyers with H.N.24 had fuelled, in the *Galatea*, with the *Arethusa* and eight destroyers to arrive in position 58° 30′ N., 3° 30′ E. at 1700 (if possible) 8th April, and then sweep to the northward.

[4] The important enemy report contained in this signal was brought back by the R.A.F. bombers after their attack on the enemy ships, which had taken place west of Jutland in approximately 57° N., 6° E. between 1322 and 1327. The projected force of 35 bombers had been reduced to 18 Blenheims ; of these, 12 succeeded in attacking, but they could claim no hits. They did not get back till between 1612 and 1652, which accounts for the delay between time of sighting (1325) and the receipt of the report by the Commander-in-Chief (1727). An attack report made on the way home was not received.

Having received from Rosyth a more exact account of the enemy, based on photographs, the Commander-in-Chief signalled to the fleet after leaving harbour, ' We are endeavouring to intercept enemy ships reported by aircraft at 1325 in 56° 50′ N., 6° 10′ E., course 320°, 17 knots ; one battlecruiser, one pocket battleship, three cruisers and about 12 destroyers '. With this end in view he steered for a position in 61° 00′ N., 1° 00′ E. at 19 knots, increasing to 20 knots at midnight, 7th/8th.

He then had in company three capital ships (*Rodney*, *Valiant* and *Repulse*), three cruisers (*Sheffield*, *Penelope* and the French *Emile Bertin*[1] which had arrived at Scapa that afternoon) and 10 destroyers.[2] Vice-Admiral Edward-Collins, with the *Galatea*, *Arethusa* and 11 destroyers[3] was steering from the Forth for the position in 58° 30′ N., 3° 30′ E., after which he was to sweep to the northward. He was joined next morning by four more destroyers,[4] which had brought a convoy to the Forth.

The *Renown* was already approaching the coast of Norway in support of the Vest Fjord minelayers, and the *Birmingham* was on her way to join her.

Two other cruisers were also at sea, under Vice-Admiral Layton, the *Manchester* (flag) and *Southampton*. They had sailed from Scapa that morning (7th) to cover two Norwegian convoys ; O.N.25 which had left Methil on the 5th escorted by the anti-aircraft cruiser *Calcutta* and four destroyers,[5] and H.N.25 which was about to sail from Bergen.[6] Admiral Layton met O.N.25 some 15 miles north-east of Muckle Flugga during the afternoon, but in consequence of the report of the enemy fleet at sea it was turned back in the evening for British waters, by order of the Commander-in-Chief.[7] Admiral Layton had received a signal from the Commander-in-Chief timed 1934, 7th, saying that the fleet would be in position 61° N., 1° E. at 0700, 8th ; but the situation at midnight he described as obscure. ' Nothing definite was known of the larger enemy force since 1342 ', says his diary. ' There was no precise information as to the whereabouts, and no information as to the intentions of the Commander-in-Chief '. He therefore remained with the convoy while it ' continued its slow progress into a north-westerly gale '.

As for destroyers, apart from the ten with his flag, the Commander-in-Chief had nearly 50 under his orders ready for service, with a score refitting, some of which would soon be completed ; and six French destroyers had arrived at Scapa that day.[8]

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[1] The *Emile Bertin* lost contact soon after putting to sea and returned to Scapa.

[2] *Codrington* (D.1), *Griffin*, *Jupiter*, *Electra*, *Escapade*, *Brazen*, *Bedouin*, *Punjabi*, *Eskimo*, *Kimberley*.

[3] *Afridi* (D.4), *Gurkha*, *Sikh*, *Mohawk*, *Zulu*, *Cossack*, *Kashmir*, *Kelvin* ; O.R.P. *Grom*, *Blyskawica*, *Burza*.

[4] *Somali* (D.6), *Matabele*, *Mashona*, *Tartar*.

[5] *Javelin*, *Janus*, *Juno*, *Grenade*.

[6] The Commander-in-Chief, Rosyth, asked the Admiralty to stop the convoy at Bergen ; but it ' fortunately weighed anchor contrary to instructions ', says the Rosyth diary, and proceeded to a rendezvous outside on the 8th April, thus escaping from the invading Germans. About noon on the 9th, Captain J. S. Pinkney, Master of s.s. *Flyingdale*, who had been appointed ' guide of the convoy ', fell in with the German tanker *Skagerrak*, then on her way to Trondheim. Her conduct aroused his suspicions, and hearing soon afterwards from a Swedish ship that the Germans had landed at Bergen, he took charge of the convoy and put to sea, falling in with a destroyer escort sent by the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, a couple of hours later. Captain Pinkney was subsequently awarded the O.B.E. for his initiative on this occasion.

[7] Twenty-four ships, however, lost touch and continued their voyage. Of these, 13 were sunk or captured by the enemy.

[8] *See* Appendix A. Appendix C (1) gives the disposition at noon, 9th April.

During the night of 7th/8th April, the fleet maintained its north-north-easterly course at 20 knots, and at 0530, 8th—the time at which the minelaying was completed—was in 60° 28′ N., 0° 28′ E.

5. First enemy contact : loss of the *Glowworm*, 8th April [PLAN 2

Meanwhile Admiral Whitworth had arrived off the mouth of Vest Fjord in the evening of 7th April, expecting to meet the *Birmingham* and her two destroyers ; but on reaching the rendezvous he had neither sight nor news of them. The minelayers with their escort were detached and laid their mines between 0430 and 0530, 8th, while the *Renown* with the *Greyhound*—the only remaining destroyer of her screen—patrolled in roughly 67° 30′ N., 10° 30′ E., 30 miles to the westward of the entrance to Vest Fjord and 100 miles from the minefield.

At about 0830, Admiral Whitworth received a signal timed 0759, 8th, from the *Glowworm* (Lieut.-Commander Roope) which had lost the squadron the day before[1] (*see* Sec. 3 *ante*) reporting two enemy destroyers in about 65° 04′ N., 6° 04′ E., 140 miles distant from the *Renown*, which with the *Greyhound* turned to the southward at their best speed and steered to intercept the enemy.[2]

Further signals from the *Glowworm* showed that she was engaging a superior force, the last signal being timed 0855 ; it was not till the war was over that the details of her fate became known.

The two enemy destroyers reported by the *Glowworm* at 0759 were part of the main German force which had been sighted by British aircraft on the previous day, 7th April ; in the bad weather and heavy sea, they had lost contact with their heavier consorts. The first of them to be sighted by the *Glowworm*, soon after 0710, was the *Hans Lüdemann :* the British destroyer fired recognition signals, but on orders from the S.O., 3rd German Destroyer Flotilla, the enemy ship made off to the N.W. at 35 knots, followed by two salvos from the *Glowworm* which appear to have fallen short.[3] Shortly afterwards the *Glowworm* sighted the second German destroyer, the *Bernd von Arnim*, on her starboard bow, heading in the other direction. The enemy ship opened fire at 0802 in 64° 05′ N., 06° 18′ E., and a running fight ensued ; in spite of accurate fire on the part of the *Glowworm*, the German destroyer was not hit, though she suffered some damage to her superstructure from the heavy seas, which nearly capsized her. The wireless message sent by the *Bernd von Arnim* on being attacked was picked up by the main German force which was not far off, and the *Hipper* was at once ordered to the destroyer's assistance. Owing to the bad weather it was not until 0857 that she was able to identify which was the hostile destroyer and to open fire. The *Glowworm* fired a salvo of two or three torpedoes which the *Hipper* avoided ; then, considerably damaged by enemy gunfire, the destroyer laid a smoke screen and momentarily

[1] The *Glowworm* after losing touch had proceeded back towards Scapa, as she had no rendezvous, until ordered by the Commander-in-Chief to proceed north once more to a position 67° 00′ N., 10° 00′ E. to meet the V.A., B.C.S.

[2] At about the same time the Commander-in-Chief, then some 300 miles to the south-west of the *Glowworm*'s position, detached the *Repulse, Penelope* and four destroyers to proceed at their best speed to her assistance. The Commander-in-Chief remarked that if this was the same German force as that reported by aircraft on 7th, it would have had to have made good 27 knots, which, though possible, he deemed improbable. The explanation seems to be that the *Glowworm*'s signalled position was in error nearly 60 miles to the northward. The Germans placed the encounter in 64° 05′ N., 6° 18′ E.

[3] The German ships had orders to avoid action until their missions in Norway had been completed.

disappeared from view. The *Hipper* entered the *Glowworm*'s smoke screen and, failing to answer her helm owing to the high seas, found herself in the path of the British ship. The destroyer rammed her just abaft the starboard anchor wrecking her own bows, then crashing down her side tore away 130 ft. of the *Hipper*'s armoured belt and her starboard torpedo tubes. She herself was fatally damaged : listing heavily with her torpedo tubes under water she lay wrecked and blazing and blew up a few minutes later, sinking in 64° 27′ N., 6° 28′ E.

The *Hipper* picked up 40 survivors, including one officer, a Sub-Lieutenant ; the captain of the *Glowworm* was being hauled aboard and had just reached the cruiser's deck when he let go exhausted and was drowned.[1]

6. The sinking of S.S. *Rio de Janeiro* (1200, 8th April) [PLAN 2

Less than three hours after the loss of the *Glowworm*, there occurred some 500 miles to the southward an incident which might well have compromised the German invasion scheme, had the correct inference been drawn. The Polish submarine *Orzel*, on patrol in the Skagerrak, intercepted the German S.S. *Rio de Janeiro* (bound for Bergen) just outside territorial waters off Kristiansand. After her crew had been given the opportunity to abandon ship, she was torpedoed, sinking at about noon. A Norwegian destroyer and local fishing folk rescued some hundreds of German soldiers in uniform, who stated that they were on their way to Bergen, to protect it against the Allies. This report reached the Norwegian parliament (the Storting) that evening, but it was not credited and no special steps were taken to warn the Navy and coast defences—the only part of the Norwegian forces mobilised at the time—or to take any other precautionary measures.[2]

The report also reached the British Admiralty, where it seems to have been recognised as evidence that the invasion of Norway was in fact under way ; but Admiral Raeder's diversion was having its effect and there the chief interest centred on bringing to action the enemy heavy ships reported at sea the day before. Apart from a hint to the Allied submarines on patrol, which were being re-disposed to intercept the heavy ships, no special action was taken ; nor was the report of the *Rio de Janeiro* incident passed to the Commander-in-Chief till 2255 that evening (8th).[3]

7. Vice-Admiral Whitworth's movements, 8th April [PLAN 2

Meanwhile, Admiral Whitworth had continued to the southward making 20 knots for the first hour, but easing down later, because the flagship showed signs of damage through steaming into the heavy sea. Further signals from the *Glowworm* showed that she was engaging a superior force, the last signal being timed 0855 ; not long afterwards, it had to be assumed that she was sunk.

At 1045 a signal came from the Admiralty, directing the eight destroyers of the Vest Fjord mining force to join him, and at 1114 a message that the report

[1] When the details of the *Glowworm*'s gallant action became known, H.M. The King approved the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to her Commanding Officer Lieut.-Commander G. B. Roope.

[2] Carl J. Hambro, President of the Storting, I SAW IT HAPPEN IN NORWAY.

[3] The episode considerably perturbed the German Naval War Staff, who noted in the War Diary that it ' must result in disclosing the German operation and alarming the Norwegians so that surprise is no longer possible. Reuter reported at 2030 from Oslo " that the ship had been torpedoed near Kristiansand with 300 men on board." Thus the enemy has been warned and action by him must be expected at any moment.'

about a German expedition to Narvik in A.T.1259/7 might be true and that German ships might be then on their way. ' On the presumption that the enemy would proceed to Narvik,' he writes in his diary, ' and giving their force a maximum speed of 25 knots, I found I could reach the line of advance ahead of them at 1330. I steered for this point. In the visibility, which was now reduced to 2 or 3 miles, there was, however, little chance of intercepting an enemy force with only one destroyer in company ; and I decided to turn to the north-eastward, at 1330 and rendezvous with the minelaying force.' The destroyers joined at 1715, some 20 miles west by south from Skomvaer Light ; and the squadron stood away to the westward to fulfil a plan formed on receiving an aircraft report of the enemy, timed 1400 and received 1516, which put a battlecruiser, two cruisers, and two destroyers in 64° 12′ N., 6° 25′ E., steering west.

' This force,' says Admiral Whitworth, ' might well have been that which had sunk *Glowworm*, whose last report had given the enemy course as 180°. I appreciated the situation as follows. The German force reported by *Glowworm* might (*a*) return to their base at once, (*b*) make for Iceland, (*c*) make for Murmansk, where it was possible a German tanker was waiting to refuel them, (*d*) be part of a force proceeding to Narvik. Our own forces were at sea to the southward ; and I therefore determined to dispose my force to deal with the situation, if the enemy chose the alternative of proceeding to the northward. Accordingly, I prepared a plan which provided for a line-ahead patrol by destroyers to the westward of Skomvaer Light, with *Renown* in a position some 50 miles to the northward. It was my further intention to form an extended screen at dawn, and sweep to the southward.'

Two hours later (1915) came A.T.1850/8 : ' Most immediate. The force under your orders is to concentrate on preventing any German force proceeding to Narvik.' But, ' the weather was such as to make it advisable to keep my ships concentrated, and I conceived it my first duty to maintain them in a condition of sea-going and fighting efficiency.' The Admiral therefore told his squadron, ' Our object is to prevent German forces reaching Narvik : my present intention is to alter course at 2100 to 280°, and to turn 180° in succession at midnight : enemy heavy ships and light forces have been reported off Norwegian coast ; position of *Birmingham* force is not known.' The squadron duly turned to the new course, but the destroyers found themselves unmanageable in the seaway, so the Admiral altered more to the northward. In the meantime he had heard from the Commander-in-Chief that more ships were coming to him, the *Repulse*, *Penelope*, *Bedouin*, *Eskimo*, *Punjabi* and *Kimberley*, which had parted from Sir Charles Forbes that morning to go to help the *Glowworm*. Accordingly at 2200 Admiral Whitworth signalled his position to the *Birmingham* and *Repulse* : ' 67° 9′ N., 10° 10′ E., course 310°, speed 8 knots, wind N.W., force 10 ; nine destroyers in company ; intend to patrol entrance to Vest Fjord when weather moderates.' The *Birmingham* never joined him. Soon after making his signal he received her 8 o'clock position : she was 80 miles away in 66° 12′ N., 7° 52′ E., hove to with one destroyer in company and running short of oil, so Admiral Whitworth ordered her to Scapa. The *Repulse* and her consorts joined him in the afternoon of the 9th.

8. Movements of Commander-in-Chief, 8th April [PLAN 2

As already mentioned the Commander-in-Chief on receipt of the *Glowworm*'s enemy report had detached the *Repulse* with reinforcements to close her position ; at the same time, the speed of the fleet was increased to 22 knots.

During the forenoon the Admiralty signal ordering the minelaying destroyers and their screen to join Admiral Whitworth was received (1045). The Commander-in-Chief subsequently remarked that this message, which led to the Vest Fjord being left without any of our forces on patrol in it, had a very far-reaching effect. The situation was not clear to him at the time, but he assumed that the Admiralty would not have withdrawn the destroyers patrolling the minefield without good reason, and he did not wish to break wireless silence as the enemy was between the *Renown* and the battle fleet and the *Repulse*.

In the early afternoon the Admiralty informed the Commander-in-Chief[1] that the cruisers for Plan R.4 had been ordered to disembark troops and would leave Rosyth at 1400 to proceed northwards ; that the *Aurora*[2] and destroyers in the Clyde were leaving at 1300 for Scapa, and that the *Emile Bertin* and French destroyers were preparing for sea. The *Manchester, Southampton,* the four destroyers then with the *Teviot Bank* and the two destroyers off Bud were also put at his disposal.

The abandonment of Plan R.4 greatly surprised Sir Charles Forbes, in whose mind the reports of the day before had left no doubt that the operation which Plan R.4 had been designed to counter was actually under way.[3] He already had sufficient cruisers at his disposal, and the troops embarked in Vice-Admiral Cunningham's ships might have been very useful. Had they been sailed, for example, as soon as the report of the *Rio de Janeiro* incident reached the Admiralty, they could have got to Stavanger—which with its airfield was to prove the key to the whole campaign on the west coast of Norway—ahead of the Germans.[4] (The *Rodney* and *Valiant* could have been far enough south to provide big ship cover.)

At 1400 a flying boat scouting ahead of the fleet sighted a German squadron of one battlecruiser, two cruisers and two destroyers in 64° 12′ N., 6° 25′ E. steering west. This was the Trondheim group—*Hipper* and four destroyers—which was cruising in this area till the time arrived to make for the fjord. The westerly course they were reported on thus had no real significance, but was very misleading to the British Commander-in-Chief. The full version of the aircraft's report reached him a little after 1500 ; and he altered course to north at 1530 to intercept this squadron, altering again to 340° at 1615 because he 'considered on course 000°, allowing enemy speed 18 knots, he might slip past if he steered south of west'—the flagship's position being 63° 21′ N., 4° 28′ E. at 1600. He also sent off his second flying boat to search at that time and the *Rodney*'s aircraft at 1843,[5] but neither gave him further news of the enemy. By this time it was blowing hard from the N.N.W., and speed had been reduced to 14 knots at about 1800 to ease the destroyers' suffering in the head sea.

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[1] A.T.1216/8 received 1300 and A.T.1317/8 received 1400.

[2] Admiral Sir Edward Evans was ordered to haul down his flag, but to remain in the *Aurora* if he so desired. This the Admiral decided to do, and he accompanied her to sea.

[3] It is not known why Plan R.4 was thus easily given up at this particular juncture. It must have been envisaged from the first that any German expedition would be covered by their fleet, and the Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet had at his disposal forces superior to the whole German naval strength, without counting the cruisers used as troop carriers in Plan R.4.

[4] Rosyth to Stavanger, 350 miles, *i.e.* 18 hours at 20 knots or 14 hours at 25 knots. The Germans landed only 150 men at Egersund and 1100 men at Kristiansand (south). Rail communication from Stavanger ran through Egersund only as far as Lister Fjord, *i.e.* about half-way between Stavanger and Kristiansand.

[5] The Commander-in-Chief was by this time so certain that the Germans were about to invade Norway that he personally told the pilot of this Walrus that he was to allow himself enough fuel to land in Norwegian waters and then give himself up ; that he would be free next day, since Germany was going to war with Norway, when he was to get hold of enough fuel to take him back to the Shetlands. All of this he did.

In the meanwhile, several messages had been received indicating a large enemy movement in the Kattegat and Skagerrak. At 1512, A.T. 1435 informed the Admiral :—' Naval Attaché, Copenhagen, reports *Gneisenau* or German warship *Blücher* with two cruisers, three destroyers, passed Langeland Belt, northbound, daylight today, 8th April. Similar force now passing northward of Moen through Sound at 1100. Large concentration of trawlers north Kattegat. Report A.1.' Some hours later a report from the submarine *Triton* stated that the *Gneisenau* and a heavy cruiser, with the *Emden* and some destroyers, passed the Skaw, going westward, at 1800. This force was almost certainly that which had left Kiel at 0200, 8th, on its way to occupy Oslo. It actually consisted of the *Blücher, Lützow, Emden* and some torpedo boats and light craft. According to the Germans, after passing the Skaw at 1800 it was subjected to constant submarine alarms. Two torpedo tracks were sighted and avoiding action taken, but no damage was suffered.[1] A ' Blücher ' with two other cruisers and a destroyer was also reported by the *Sunfish* at 1815 in 57° 57′ N., 11° 07′ E. (20 miles north-east of the Skaw) steering north-west.

At about 1930, 8th April, by which time the battle fleet should have intercepted the enemy and the *Repulse* should have been well to the north of him, if the flying boat's estimate of his course was anything like correct, the Commander-in-Chief reviewed the situation. There appeared to be one enemy battlecruiser to the north, but this was by no means certain ; if so, whither was she bound ? Probably Narvik, as the iron ore trade was the natural objective. There appeared to be a battlecruiser and perhaps two pocket battleships in the Kattegat or Skagerrak. Our own cruiser forces were sweeping up north from the latitude of Rosyth with no big ship covering force in their vicinity. The *Warspite* and *Furious*[2] were proceeding up the west coast of Scotland. The Admiralty had just ordered Admiral Whitworth to concentrate on preventing any German force proceeding to Narvik (A.T. 1850/8).

Under these circumstances the Commander-in-Chief decided to order the *Repulse, Penelope* and screen to continue to the northward and to reinforce Admiral Whitworth, while himself would turn to the southward with the *Rodney, Valiant, Sheffield* and screen, to try to bring the large enemy vessels in the south to action with the help of the cruiser screen.

At 2000 the battle fleet's position was 64° 22′ N., 3° 40′ E. and ten minutes later course was altered to 195° and speed increased to 18 knots. Just then A.T. 1842/8 arrived, which is digested as follows in the Commander-in-Chief's diary :—

(*a*) Two objectives—

(i) to prevent German northern force returning ;

(ii) to deal with possible German forces reported passing Great Belt at 1400/8, if they are going to Stavanger or Bergen.

(*b*) The Commander-in-Chief's force to sweep to south with light forces spread to northward, keeping east of 2° 35′ E.

(*c*) Admiral Cunningham's force to sweep to northward, keeping west of 1° 50′ E.

(*d*) Admiral Edward-Collins to act as striking force by night, keeping between 1° 50′ E. and 2° 35′ E.

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[1] The *Triton* had unsuccessfully attacked the *Gneisenau* before making her enemy report.

The *Furious* had been ordered north from the Clyde on 8th April. Her two T.S.R. Squadrons were embarked, but unfortunately her Fighter Squadron (801) was at Evanton and therefore too far off to comply with what was obviously an urgent order. She was therefore unable to provide any fighter protection in the ensuing days.

Two further signals from the Admiralty were received that evening: A.T. 2018/8, to the effect that Admiral Layton was to patrol during the night in 62° 10′ N. between 1° 50′ E. and 2° 35′ E., unless he should receive other orders from Sir Charles Forbes, and A.T. 2102/8, which referring to the *Triton*'s signal and presumably also to the flying boat's report in the North Sea that afternoon, said it was ' possible the two German forces intend to make a junction, which we calculate they could do about 0500 in about 60° N. ; not intended to alter instructions in A.T. 1842 '.

Accordingly, the Commander-in-Chief ordered the following dispositions (summary of Commander-in-Chief's 2252/8) :—

> His position at midnight would be 63° 15′ N., 3° E., course 180°, speed 18 knots. He estimates that the enemy reported by the flying boat in the afternoon ' may have passed south and east of me '.
>
> Admiral Layton to rendezvous at 0700 in 61° 9′ N., 3° E. The cruisers with Admirals Edward-Collins and Cunningham to be stationed in pairs along the parallel of 59° 30′ N., by 0500, four stations 20 miles apart, stretching westwards from 4° 30′ E., and at that hour they should steer 355° at 16 knots until they meet the fleet, when they should turn to 180°.

These arrangements were annulled by the Admiralty ' because patrol line placed dispersed and weaker forces in position where they might be caught between two enemy forces with our battle fleet 135 miles away ' ; instead, the cruisers were to rendezvous in 59° 30′ N., 2° 30′ E. at 0500 on the 9th and thence steer to meet the fleet (A.T. 0210 and 0235/9).

The cruiser admirals could not carry out these instructions exactly. Admiral Edward-Collins, with the *Galatea, Arethusa* and 15 destroyers, had reached the position 58° 30′ N., 3° 50′ E. at 1445, 8th, and then turned north to sweep.[1] Soon afterwards he received the enemy report from the flying boat, but he considered that the Commander-in-Chief ' knew my position and movements with reasonable accuracy ' ; he therefore kept wireless silence, and decided to steer 000° throughout the night.

He did not long maintain this course, however ; first there came the Admiralty orders to act as a striking force between 1° 50′ E. and 2° 35′ E., then the Commander-in-Chief's order for a cruiser patrol line, and finally the Admiralty order for the cruisers to concentrate and steer to meet the fleet. The first order meant turning to the westward and reducing speed in a head sea, and when the signal to concentrate came it was not possible to reach the new rendezvous without a large increase of speed, so he altered course to meet Admiral Cunningham, who he was aware, ' would steer northward from the position ordered '. Admiral Cunningham had sailed from Rosyth that afternoon (8th) with the *Devonshire, Berwick, York* and *Glasgow*, and after meeting Admiral Derrien in the *Emile Bertin* with two French destroyers[2] in 58° N., 2° W. (off Kinnaird Head) stood to the north-eastward to carry out the sweep ordered in A.T. 1842/8.

Events were now moving swiftly, and from 0100, 9th April, numerous reports, mostly from the Admiralty, but also from the submarines *Truant* and *Seal* stationed in the Skagerrak, showed that the Germans were invading Norway.

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[1] The *Glowworm*'s signals were received in the forenoon, but the Admiral thought her too far north ' to warrant my departing from the Commander-in-Chief's ordered plan '.

[2] *Tartu, Maillé Brézé.*

CHAPTER II

GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY

9. The German Landings, 9th April 1940 [PLANS 1, 11, 13

The invasion of Norway was indeed in full swing during the early hours of this eventful day. So far as the Norwegians were concerned, complete surprise was achieved. On the evening of the 8th April, the relations between the two countries, between whom a longstanding traditional friendship had hitherto existed, appeared entirely normal ; before this night was out, a murderous assault was let loose on all the Norwegian strategic centres. Their Army was not mobilised ; no serious opposition could be offered to the landings, once the weak naval forces and coast defences were passed. It is greatly to the credit of the Commanders of these forces that despite the shock of suddenly being confronted by foreign warships arriving out of the darkness, almost without exception they made the instant decision to offer what resistance they could.

But it was of little avail.

At Trondheim and Bergen the landings took place practically unopposed, though at the latter place the *Königsberg*[1] and *Bremse* were damaged by shore batteries ; at Kristiansand four separate attempts to enter the fiord were foiled by gunfire from Odderöy Island, and a German steamer ahead of the groups was hit and set on fire ; there and at Arendal further delay was caused by mist, but both places were occupied before noon. Only at Oslo was the landing seriously checked.

Oslo lies at the head of Oslo Fjord, some 60 miles from the sea.[2] The German Force (Group 5)[3] reached the entrance to the fjord about midnight, 8th/9th, and passing the outer defences—a battery at Rauöy, ten miles up the fjord, which opened fire—at high speed, reached the narrows at Dröbak (about 18 miles short of Oslo) at about 0340, 9th. So far they had only encountered a Norwegian whaleboat armed with one gun, which had opened fire and had been promptly overwhelmed. Just above Dröbak the channel narrows to three cables in width ; here were the inner defences, situated on islets, Oscarsborg and Kaholm. At 0420, as Admiral Kummetz leading the force in the *Blücher* approached, the Norwegian batteries on Oscarsborg suddenly opened fire at a range of only 500 yards ; the ship was hit repeatedly and the fire control equipment of her main armament was put of out action. Though crippled, she replied on both sides with her heavy and light A.A. guns, and increasing to full speed had reached Kaholm, when she was struck by several torpedoes fired by the torpedo battery there. With all her engines out of action, the *Blücher* dropped anchor east of Askholmene, a mile and a half further up the fjord ; fierce fires on board could not be got under control and at 0623 she heeled over to port and sank in deep water. Most of the life-boats and floats had been destroyed by the fires, and the crew and troops were forced to swim ashore, which caused considerable losses.

At 0450, after the *Blücher* had been heavily hit, Admiral Kummetz handed over the command of the group to the Captain of the *Lützow*, Captain Thiele.

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[1] The *Königsberg* received three hits by 8-in. shells fired by the Kvarven battery, which inflicted such damage that her Captain decided he could not take her to sea that evening to return to Germany, as had been intended. She was consequently still at Bergen next morning, when the F.A.A. carried out an attack which sank her.

[2] *See* Plan 13.

[3] *See* Sec. 1 *ante*.

He, having observed the fate of the *Blücher*, withdrew the force and subsequently landed its troops at Sonsbukten some ten miles to the southward, intending to carry out an attack on the defences guarding the Dröbak Narrows from both land and sea. After heavy attacks by the Luftwaffe, however, the Norwegian resistance gradually gave way ; but not before the minelayer *Olav Tryggvason*,[1] stationed at the undefended naval base at Horten, had fought a spirited action with the German torpedo boat *Albatros* and two minesweepers, in which she sank one of the latter (R.17) and forced the *Albatros* to withdraw.

By midday, Oslo was virtually in the hands of the enemy, owing to his overwhelming air superiority ; but thanks to the check at Dröbak, the operation had not gone ' according to plan,' and there had been time for the Norwegian Royal Family, Government and Parliament to escape from the capital, taking with them all the gold in the Bank of Norway.

In the north the landing at Narvik had gone exactly as planned. Arriving off the entrance to Vest Fjord in the evening of 8th April, Commodore Bonte's ten destroyers parted company with the battlecruisers and proceeded up the fiord. Avoiding the British minefield, from which, it will be remembered, the patrolling destroyers had been withdrawn by order of the Admiralty some ten hours previously, they suddenly appeared out of a snow squall off Narvik at early dawn.[2] A gallant, but ineffectual resistance was offered by two Norwegian coast defence vessels, the *Eidsvold* and *Norge*.[3] Outnumbered and taken by surprise[4] there was little they could do. The *Eidsvold*, which was lying outside the harbour, had only time to return a peremptory refusal to a demand for surrender before she was sunk by torpedo and gunfire with the loss of nearly all her crew. The *Norge*, at anchor inside the harbour, opened fire on the *Bernd von Arnim* as she went alongside to land her troops a few minutes later, but was soon hit by two torpedoes and sunk, with heavy loss of life.[5] The disembarkation of General Dietl's troops then proceeded unopposed.[6]

10. Admiral Whitworth's encounter with the *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*, 9th April

[PLAN 2

While this was going on at Narvik, a sharp engagement was taking place to seaward of Vest Fjord between Admiral Whitworth's force and the German battlecruisers. After detaching the destroyers to Narvik (2000, 8th April) the

[1] *Olav Tryggvason*, built 1934, 1,747 tons, 4 4·7-in., 1 3-in. H.A. guns, 2 17·7-in. torpedo tubes.

[2] Sunrise at Narvik, 9th April, 0425 ; Civil twilight (sun 6° below horizon) commenced 0323.

[3] *Norge* and *Eidsvold*, 2 8·2-in. ; 6 5·9-in. ; 8 3-in., 2 3-pdr. H.A.

[4] Actually, the surprise was not complete. The Naval Authorities at Oslo had warned the ' 3rd District ' (which included Narvik) at 1925, 8th April, that a German attack was imminent. Two lookout boats sighted and reported the Germans at 0310, 9th, by wireless, as British. The receipt of this signal just before the arrival of the Germans raised doubts as to their identity in the coast defence vessels.

[5] About half the crew of the *Norge* was lost. Among the survivors was the Norwegian Senior Naval Officer, Commodore Askim, who, having gone down with his ship, was rescued in an unconscious state. When the final Allied evacuation took place (June, 1940) Commodore Askim succeeded in escaping from Norway and was subsequently Naval Attaché in the U.S.A. On the night of the 8th/9th May 1945, as Naval member of the Allied Supreme Commission representing General Eisenhower, he had the pleasure of handing to the German General Böhme at Lillehammer the written order for the surrender of the German Naval units then in Norway.

[6] Major Sundlo, the Norwegian officer commanding in Narvik, was one of the few Norwegian traitors working in touch with Quisling. His action was speedily disavowed by the Norwegian officers in the area, but not in time for any resistance to be made in Narvik.

Gneisenau and *Scharnhorst* had steered to the north-westward in order to take up their patrolling position in the Arctic. This course brought them into contact with Admiral Whitworth in the *Renown*, who, with his nine destroyers, was then returning to the south-eastward after spending the night to the west of the Lofoten Islands, waiting for the weather to moderate before establishing a patrol off Vest Fjord.

' From midnight onwards,' runs Admiral Whitworth's diary, ' the weather improved ; but knowing that the destroyers would be widely strung out on account of the weather I decided to wait until the first sign of dawn and sufficient light to make the turn to the south-eastward without losing touch with them or any part of them.' The squadron turned at 0230, the 9th, snow squalls making ' the visibility variable ' ; but ' dawn twilight[1] strengthened to the eastward, and conditions improved '. An hour or so later, roughly in 67° 20′ N., 9° 40′ E., some 50 miles to the westward of Skomvaer Light, they sighted a darkened ship coming out of a snow-squall with apparently a second ship astern of her. The presence of two ships was soon confirmed ; they were thought to be a ' Scharnhorst ' and a ' Hipper ', though later evidence has shown that they were the battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*.[2] They joined battle just under half an hour from the first sighting.

When she first sighted the German ships, at 0337, the *Renown* was steering 130°, at 12 knots, with her destroyers stationed astern. The enemy lay broad on the port bow, 10 miles distant or rather more, steering to the north-west, on a course approximately opposite to that of the British force. The *Renown* maintained her course for ten minutes, then altered to 080° increasing speed to 15 knots and soon after to 20 knots ; at 0359 she hauled right round to 305°, roughly parallel to the enemy, with her " A " arcs just open ; at 0405, when just abaft the beam of the leading German ship, she opened fire at 18,600 yards. It was not till 0411 that the *Gneisenau* returned the fire ; she had sighted the British force at 0350, but in the poor light to the westward had not recognised it as such until 0400, when the alert was sounded for action. The *Scharnhorst* on the other hand did not sight the *Renown* until the latter opened fire at 0405. A fierce engagement ensued during the next ten minutes or so, both the *Gneisenau* and the *Scharnhorst* firing at the *Renown*, which was engaging the *Gneisenau* with her heavy armament, and the *Scharnhorst* with her 4·5 in., all the destroyers joining in with their 4·7 in., though at such range their fire could ' hardly have been effective '. The *Renown* was hit twice, without serious damage ; the *Gneisenau* received a hit at 0417 on the foretop at a range of 14,600 yards, destroying the main fire control equipment, and temporarily disabling her main armament. At 0418, with only her secondary armament in action, the *Gneisenau* altered course to 030°, ' with the obvious intention of breaking off the action '. To cover the *Gneisenau's* retirement, the *Scharnhorst* crossed her stern, making a screen of smoke, whereupon the *Renown*, turning northward, brought all her guns to bear on the *Scharnhorst*.

There followed a chase to windward that lasted an hour and a half, until about 0600. The wind was rising and had shifted from north-north-west to

[1] Sunrise at Narvik, 9th April, 0425 ; civil twilight (sun 6° below horizon) commenced 0323.

[2] The strong similarity of the silhouettes of the modern German ships of various classes frequently rendered their identification very difficult. This difficulty was emphasised in the conditions of light and storm under which this action was fought. The Germans, too, were in doubt as to what they were fighting, the identification in the *Scharnhorst* being a *Renown* class and in the *Gneisenau* the *Nelson*. In the latter the opinion was held that two enemy heavy ships were present, though only one was seen at a time.

north-north-east, with a heavy swell and a great sea. The destroyers soon fell astern out of the battle. The *Renown* continued to engage the *Scharnhorst* but did not succeed in hitting her ; both German ships were firing at the *Renown*, the *Gneisenau* with her after turret, and the *Scharnhorst* yawing occasionally to fire a broadside. At 0434 the *Gneisenau* received a second hit which struck ' A ' turret by the left hood of the rangefinder. It wrecked the watertight hood which resulted in the flooding of the turret, putting it out of action. A third hit struck the after A.A. gun on the port side of the platform, doing little damage. Just before 0500, the German ships disappeared in a rain-squall. Admiral Whitworth had increased to full speed early in the fight, before the turn to the north, but had soon to ease to 23 knots and afterwards to 20, at which speed he barely held the range : when the enemy disappeared in the rain, he ' decided to alter course to bring the sea on the other bow and endeavour to make more speed,' and accordingly turned to the eastward and increased to 25 knots. When the weather cleared, however, some 20 minutes later, the German ships were still heading northwards and were farther off than before. The *Renown* turned again to bring the enemy fine on her bow, and opened fire ; but the ' fire continued to be ineffective, both sides altering course to avoid the fall of shot '. There were further squalls of rain or sleet hiding the target ; the *Renown* strained herself ' to the maximum ' in trying to overhaul her opponent (for a few minutes she went 29 knots) but at last the enemy ran out of sight.

The last brief sight of the German ships came at 0615—' far ahead and out of range '. Admiral Whitworth stood on to the northward in the *Renown* until a few minutes after 0800 ; then he turned westward, hoping to cut off the enemy ' should they have broken back to southward', but no further contact occurred.

11. British dispositions, Vest Fjord area, 9th April [PLAN 2

Vice-Admiral Whitworth had already ordered his destroyers to patrol the mouth of Vest Fjord and the *Repulse* detachment ' to prevent German forces entering Narvik '. Then, soon after 0900, he received A.T. 0820/9, which told the Commander-in-Chief to make plans for attacking the enemy in Bergen and Trondheim, adding ' Narvik must be watched to prevent Germans landing, as we shall probably want to land a force there.' At that, Admiral Whitworth decided to concentrate his force off the fjord : he gave the *Repulse* a rendezvous for 1300 in 67° N., 10° E.—some 60 miles south of his own position when making the signal—and told Captain Warburton-Lee to join at 1800 in 67° N., 10° 30′ E.

The Admiralty and the Commander-in-Chief changed these dispositions. In a signal timed 0952/9, Sir Charles Forbes ordered Captain Warburton-Lee to ' send some destroyers up to Narvik to make certain that no enemy troops land '. The Admiralty made A.T. 1200/9, also addressed direct to Captain Warburton-Lee[1] :—

> ' Press reports state one German ship has arrived Narvik and landed a small force. Proceed Narvik and sink or capture enemy ship. It is at your discretion to land forces, if you think you can recapture Narvik from number of enemy present. Try to get possession of battery, if not already in enemy hands : details of battery follow.'

They had already told Admiral Whitworth that Germans had arrived, and that he must ' ensure that no reinforcements reach them ' (A.T. 1138/9), but this signal did not come to him until next day. Captain Warburton-Lee decided

[1] Repeated to Admiral Whitworth.

to go to Narvik with the four ships of his proper flotilla, the 2nd, leaving Captain Bickford with the rest to patrol the minefield he had laid the day before near the mouth of Vest Fjord. One ship, the *Impulsive*, had gone home in the morning with a damaged paravane boom, which left Captain Bickford the *Esk*, *Icarus* and *Ivanhoe*, minelayers, with no torpedoes and mounting but two guns, and the *Greyhound*, late of the *Renown's* anti-submarine screen. For Narvik there were the *Hardy*, flotilla leader, the *Hotspur* (Commander Layman), *Havock* (Lieut.-Commander Courage) and *Hunter* (Lieut.-Commander de Villiers) ; and the *Hostile* (Commander Wright) arrived unexpectedly after the flotilla had started on its mission.[1]

Captain Warburton-Lee meant originally to reach Narvik by 2000 that night, and made his plan as the flotilla steamed up Vest Fjord, passing it by signal to his consorts. But having nothing to go by beyond the press report in the Admiralty's signal he bethought him of the pilots' station at Tranoy, where he arrived about 1600, and sent on shore there for what they could tell him. The pilots had seen six ships ' larger than the *Hardy* ' going to Narvik, besides a submarine ; the entrance to the harbour was mined ; and the Germans held the place very strongly. The English, thought the pilots, would need twice as many ships. Captain Warburton-Lee signalled this intelligence to the Admiralty, the Commander-in-Chief, and Admiral Whitworth, and added : ' Intend attacking at dawn high water '.

This signal, timed 1751, reached Admiral Whitworth a little after 1800. The Admiralty's order to attack had been repeated to him, and he now considered whether he might improve the power of the attack. When the *Repulse* and the ships with her joined, about 1400, he had disposed his force thus : the *Penelope* to patrol a line running south from Skomvaer Light, rather more than 50 miles outside the minefield and about 150 miles from Narvik ; the *Renown* and *Repulse* to cruise north and south on a line 30 miles farther west, with the *Bedouin*, *Punjabi*, *Eskimo* and *Kimberley* as a screen. The *Penelope* might go in, and so might the four destroyers, though that would deprive the capital ships of their screen ; he had already ordered Captain Bickford to continue the patrol by the minefield, cancelling the signal in the morning that those four destroyers should join his flag at 1800. But the time of high water being 0140 on the 10th, Captain Warburton-Lee's signal implied an attack in the morning twilight, for which it was too late to send reinforcements in the thick weather prevailing. Moreover, so Admiral Whitworth reasoned, the plan had been made ' with the forces ordered by the Admiralty ' ; and ' the addition of other forces, involving delay and revision of the plan, was liable to cause confusion '. He decided, therefore, to leave things as they stood.

12. Movements of Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, 9th April

[PLANS 2 AND 3

While these developments had been taking place in the north, the Commander-in-Chief had been operating in the Bergen–Trondheim area. Throughout the night of 8th/9th April, while the various first reports of the invasion were coming in, he held his southerly course, being joined by Vice-Admiral Layton with the *Manchester* and *Southampton* at 0630, 9th, and by Vice-Admirals Edward-Collins, Cunningham and Derrien with their seven

[1] The *Hostile* had been with the *Birmingham*, cruising against the German fishing fleet. Being detached with a prize, and intercepting signals about the enemy and the British concentration off Vest Fjord on the 8th, she went north to find Admiral Whitworth, and eventually joined Captain Warburton-Lee instead, p.m. 9th.

cruisers and 13 destroyers (eight British, three Polish, two French)[1] some three hours later. The *Tartar* and the three Polish destroyers were detached to the northward to join Convoy HN.25[2]—at least 37 ships—then waiting off Hovden (61° 40′ N., 4° 45′ E.) and escort it to the United Kingdom, the remainder of the fleet continuing to the southward.

By this time it was clear that Germany was carrying out a full scale invasion of Norway, seizing (among other places) all the ports that the Allies had hoped to save from her control by occupying themselves, but the strength of his forces in the various areas was naturally in doubt. At 0630, 9th, the Commander-in-Chief asked the Admiralty for news of the German strength in Bergen, as he wished to send there Admiral Layton's two cruisers—then just arriving in the fleet. This signal reached the Admiralty about the time A.T. 0820/9 to the Commander-in-Chief was being framed :—

> ' Prepare plans for attacking German warships and transports in Bergen and for controlling the approaches to the port on the supposition that defences are still in hands of Norwegians.
>
> Similar plans as regards Trondheim should also be prepared, if you have sufficient forces for both.
>
> Narvik must be watched to prevent Germans landing, as we shall probably want to land a force there.
>
> At what time would forces be ready to cross the 3-mile limit in operations against Bergen and Trondheim ? '

A first report from reconnoitring aircraft put ' at least one *Köln* class cruiser in Bergen ' (A.T. 0935) ; and at 1015, the Admiralty sanctioned the Commander-in-Chief's proposal to attack there, though warning him later in A.T. 1211, that he must no longer count on the defences being friendly. The attack on the ships in Trondheim was annulled until the German battlecruisers should be found, ' as it would entail dispersion of forces ' (A.T. 1132).

Sir Charles Forbes said, in answer to A.T. 0820, that the ships could go in by the fjords north and south of Bergen ' in three hours from the order, Go ' (1032/9). By then the Rosyth ships had joined, so he could strengthen the attacking force. Admiral Layton left the fleet accordingly about 1130, an hour after A.T. 1015 came, with the *Manchester* and *Southampton*, *Glasgow* and *Sheffield* and the seven destroyers of the 4th and 6th Flotillas. He had orders :—

> ' . . . . to attack enemy forces reported in Bergen : these include one *Köln* class cruiser.
>
> Defences may be in hands of enemy.
>
> Three or four destroyers are to enter by Fejeosen Fjord, 60° 44′ N., remainder by Kors Fjord, 60° 8′ N. Object, to destroy enemy forces and report situation.
>
> Cruisers are to be in support at both entrances, which U-boats may be patrolling.'

He was south of Bergen, with Fejeosen Fjord nearly 80 miles to the north-east and Kors Fjord, bearing about east-north-east, a dozen miles nearer ; it was blowing hard from north-west with a rough sea ; the destroyers could keep up only 16 knots. ' Owing to the movement southward of the fleet during the forenoon ', writes Admiral Layton, ' it was unfortunately necessary to retrace a lot of ground to windward to get to Bergen. At 1408, aircraft reported that there were two cruisers in Bergen instead of one. With only seven destroyers available, the prospects of a successful attack now appeared

[1] Admiral Edward-Collins originally had 15 destroyers with him. But an accident robbed him of four in the early morning of the 9th, when the *Kelvin* ran on board the *Kashmir*, both ships being so severely damaged that they had to return to harbour escorted by the *Zulu* and *Cossack*.

[2] See Sec. 4 *ante*.

distinctly less, though there was some hope that the enemy could not yet have got the shore guns effectively manned '. However, soon afterwards there came orders from the Admiralty annulling the attack (A.T. 1357/9) and the squadron turned to rejoin the fleet.[1]

The Commander-in-Chief had turned north at noon, being then in 59° 44′ N., 2° 57′ E. The weather was clear, and German aircraft had been shadowing the fleet since about eight in the morning. In the afternoon their bombers came ; between 1430 and 1800 or thereabouts, some part of the fleet was constantly engaged. The Germans came from the eastward and made their first and apparently their principal attack on Admiral Layton's ships, returning from the coast. Near misses slightly damaged the *Southampton* and *Glasgow* ; and the *Gurkha*, which had got separated from the remainder, was so badly damaged that she subsequently sank. Providentially the *Aurora*, in joining the fleet from the Clyde, made contact with her some hours later and in time to save most of her company, a task on which she was still employed at 2130.

As for the main body of the fleet, the business began about 1530, when a diving aircraft hit the flagship *Rodney* with a bomb. After a lull between 1600 and 1700, the attack freshened for about half an hour, both diving and at high level. Several bombs fell near the ships, especially the *Rodney* again, and the *Valiant, Devonshire, Berwick,* and the destroyers, but there were no more hits. The British fire seems to have brought down one enemy machine,[2] reported by the *York* as falling in flames between the *Devonshire* and the *Berwick ;* yet the ships with Admiral Layton spent some 40 per cent of their 4-in. ammunition.

During these attacks from the air, fresh orders came for attempting Bergen. The *Furious* was on her way to the fleet, and the Commander-in-Chief had already suggested in his signal 1032/9 that torpedo attack by her aircraft would give the ' best chance of success ', if the Germans had the coast defences in their power : he proposed an attack at dusk on the 10th. The Admiralty agreed, at the same time arranging with the Royal Air Force to send bombers in the evening of the 9th and for the naval air station at Hatston to send some in the morning of the 10th. In the meantime, cruisers and destroyers must patrol the approaches to prevent the enemy from reinforcing Bergen and Stavanger, and to pin down their ships already there : Sir Charles was ' to consider a sweep with light forces off the south-west corner of Norway '. But the afternoon's experience made him change his mind about the *Furious*. She ' could not work in latitude of air attack to-day ', so he proposed her attacking the enemy in Trondheim, farther north, ' leaving Bergen to the Royal Air Force ' : indeed he gave the Admiralty his ' general ideas ' in the same signal 2231/9, to ' attack enemy in north with surface forces and military assistance, leaving southern area mostly to submarines, due to German air superiority in south '.

The enemy force which had been sent to occupy Bergen consisted of the cruisers *Köln, Königsberg* and *Bremse,* two torpedo boats, and the M.T.B. depot ship *Karl Peters*. At 1800, 9th, Royal Air Force bombers attacked them, but in spite of near misses, little damage was caused. An hour later, the *Köln,* accompanied by the torpedo boats, put to sea on the return journey to Germany ; the *Königsberg* was not considered seaworthy owing to injuries received from the Norwegian batteries, and she remained with the *Bremse* and *Karl Peters* to supplement the harbour defences.

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[1] ' Looking back on this affair, I consider that the Admiralty kept too close a control upon the Commander-in-Chief, and after learning his original intention to force the passage into Bergen, we should have confined ourselves to sending him information.' Churchill, THE SECOND WORLD WAR, Vol. I, p. 470.

2. IT IS NOW KNOWN THAT TWO JU.88's FAILED TO RETURN TO THEIR BASE: CAUSE OF LOSS IS UNKNOWN TO THE GERMANS.

The *Köln* and her consorts did not get far that night. Enemy wireless signals indicated the presence of the British forces which soon afterwards established patrols to seaward of the approaches to Bergen, so Rear-Admiral Schmundt decided to postpone the attempt and anchored at the head of Mauranger Fjord (60° 08′ N., 6° 16′ E.) till the following evening, 10th April, when he resumed his passage, arriving home without incident on the 11th.

Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, had sent back Admiral Layton to the coast the evening before, as soon as the Admiralty orders for watching Bergen and Stavanger had been deciphered. Admiral Edward-Collins followed with the *Galatea* and *Arethusa*, the *Emile Bertin*, and the two French destroyers. Sir Charles' 1837/9 thus disposed them : two of Admiral Layton's cruisers with destroyers ' to sweep down Norwegian coast ' from Fejeosen Fjord south of Kors Fjord, and the other half of his force to sweep from Kors Fjord to Obrestad, 20 miles south of Stavanger, while Admiral Edward-Collins patrolled off Fejeosen. The object given was ' to stop reinforcements for Stavanger and Bergen '. They were to cruise until 0400, the 10th, and then to steer for a rendezvous in 61° N., 1° E. It is not clear from his diary how far Admiral Layton acted on these orders, for he says merely that he had instructions (under Sir Charles' 1614/9 and A.T. 1451/9, when he turned back) to ' maintain a patrol off the entrance to Bergen to prevent enemy forces escaping ' and that ' this patrol was maintained during the night ' ; yet he altered course for the rendezvous at four in the morning, as Sir Charles' 1837/9 prescribed. Captain Pegram of the *Glasgow*, commanding the southern patrol, had this latter signal from a consort, the *Sheffield*, but only at 0145, the 10th. When approaching the coast the evening before, he had come upon the *Aurora* rescuing the survivors of the *Gurkha*, and she asked to join the *Glasgow*, as she had no other orders. Thereupon, Captain Pegram sent her with one destroyer to stop the gap at Bommel Fjord, 30 miles to the southward, while he patrolled north and south of Kors Fjord, 7 miles off-shore, with the rest of his group. When the *Sheffield* passed on Sir Charles' later signal, it was too late to reach Obrestad in the time, but Captain Pegram stretched south as far as Utsire, 25 miles short of Stavanger, before turning away to seaward for the rendezvous.

No surface contact with the enemy occurred during the night, with the exception of an attempt by the *Manchester* to ram a U-boat. But in the south the submarine *Truant* scored a success, torpedoing the cruiser *Karlsruhe* at 1858, 9th, an hour after she had left Kristiansand on her homeward passage. She sank at 2150, her end expedited by torpedoes from German torpedo boats, which had taken off her crew.

The various groups of ships off Bergen (with the exception of the *Aurora*, which proceeded direct to Scapa with the *Gurkha's* survivors) made their way to the rendezvous in the morning and found there the *Codrington* and other destroyers sent by Sir Charles Forbes with orders for them all to proceed to harbour for fuel—the British destroyers to Sullom Voe, the cruisers and the French ships to Scapa—where they arrived that evening, without incident except for an ineffective bombing attack on the 2nd Cruiser Squadron. On arrival, ammunitioning and fuelling was commenced without delay—an operation interrupted by an air raid on Scapa which lasted from 2100 to 2220. About 60 bombers were employed, but warning of their approach had been received by radar ; they achieved no damage, but lost six of their number.

The Commander-in-Chief himself, in the meanwhile, had held on to the northward after the air attacks in the afternoon of the 9th till 2000, then

steering west at 16 knots from 61° 40′ N., 2° 47′ E. for the night, and turning to the eastward again at 0500, 10th April. About an hour later, the first news of the destroyer attack on Narvik arrived—an intercepted signal from Captain D (2) to Captain D (20) timed 0551 :—' One cruiser and three destroyers off Narvik, am withdrawing to westward '.

At 0730 in 61° 24′ N., 1° W. the *Warspite* and *Furious* joined the fleet, as did several fresh destroyers (at any rate, replenished ones) after which the original destroyer screen went home for oil. The strength of the fleet then stood at three capital ships, *Rodney, Valiant* and *Warspite* ; three cruisers, *Devonshire, Berwick* and *York* ; the *Furious* aircraft carrier and 18 destroyers.

With this force the Commander-in-Chief steered to the north and east, making for a suitable position from which to attack the enemy ships in Trondheim with aircraft at dawn next morning. This course also provided cover for Convoy HN.25, which after its fortunate escape from Bergen[1] was making its way to the United Kingdom escorted by the four destroyers detached from the fleet the day before.

Soon after steadying on the north-easterly course came the pleasing tidings that at 0700 sixteen Skuas led by Lieutenant W. P. Lucy, R.N., and Captain R. T. Partridge, R.M., of the Fleet Air Arm from Hatston had attacked the *Königsberg* at Bergen and sank her with three direct hits with 500 lb. S.A.P.C. bombs ;[2] and at 1132 the Commander-in-Chief received news of Captain Warburton-Lee's dawn attack on the enemy in Narvik, which is described in the next section.

13. First Battle of Narvik, 10th April [PLAN 9

To return to the northern area.

As a result of the intelligence received from the pilots at Tranoy in the afternoon of 9th April, Captain Warburton-Lee took his flotilla down the fjord again,[3] turning back half an hour before midnight to arrive off Narvik at dawn. A.T. 2059/9 told them to patrol during the night east of 16° 33′ E., in the narrow stretch of Ofot Fjord some 20 miles west of Narvik, lest the enemy should run through Tjeldsundet into Vaags Fjord, thus escaping to the northward ; and the signal ended, ' Attack at dawn : all good luck '. Captain Warburton-Lee ignored this signal, if he received it : very likely he feared giving away his presence to the enemy, for the Admiralty had warned him before that there might be batteries either side of the narrows, near Ramnes and Hamnes Holm, which the Germans might have seized and manned.[4] If so, they could perhaps report him to friends at Narvik before the time came for his attack, and surprise must have seemed all-important for the little flotilla.

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[1] See Sec. 4 *ante*, footnote .

[2] Of this fine attack, the Vice-Admiral, Orkneys and Shetlands (Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh Binney) remarked : ' This was, I think, the first occasion on which Skuas had been used in action for the real purpose for which they were designed, viz., a dive-bombing attack on an enemy warship. The ship was sunk, the attack was a complete success and I consider it was brilliantly executed . . . the distance to Bergen and back is 560 miles, not greatly inside the maximum endurance of the Skua '.

[3] The flotilla was reported on a south-westerly course in Vest Fjord by *U.51* at 2100, 9th April. (Admiral Doenitz, War Diary.)

[4] Actually these batteries (according to the Germans) were non-existent.

A.T. 0104/10 said the Germans were supposed to have come to Narvik ' in apparently empty ore ships ', which might have stores still on board and must be sunk, if possible ; and Captain Warburton-Lee was to try to find out how the enemy did land and in what strength, and whether they had seized the Norwegian batteries. Lastly, A.T. 0136 said : ' Norwegian coast-defence ships *Eidsvold* and *Norge* may be in German hands : you alone can judge whether, in these circumstances, attack should be made. We shall support whatever decision you take '. Perhaps this last message added to Admiral Whitworth's misgivings, though he could now do nothing ; it could make no difference to Captain Warburton-Lee, whose mind was made up. The flotilla passed Tranoy again on the way in at 1 o'clock in the morning, 10th. They had then ' continuous snowstorms with visibility seldom greater than two cables . . . on the one occasion that land was seen the whole flotilla almost ran aground '. Ships lost touch at intervals, twice through merchant vessels crossing the line. But all arrived off Narvik a little after 0400, when the sky cleared and they could see for nearly a mile.

The plan of attack appears in the signals Captain Warburton-Lee made to the flotilla the day before. Apart from the pilots' information and the Admiralty messages described already, A.T. 1307/9 had told him of a three-gun battery, 18- or 12-pounders, on a hill north of the ore quay in the harbour and west of the town, facing north-west ; that is to say across the mouths of Herjangs and Rombaks Fjords. It was this signal that gave the warning, too, of possible batteries at the narrows in Ofot Fjord. He proposed the *Hardy*, *Hunter* and *Havock* should attack the shipping inside the harbour. The *Hotspur* and *Hostile* would stay outside to engage the fort if it opened fire ; to keep watch for German ships he expected to find patrolling, or coming in from the sea or from the two fjords north of Narvik ; to be ready to cover a retreat of the main body with smoke and to take disabled ships in tow. If the business prospered, and ' opposition is silenced ' the *Hardy*'s first lieutenant would lead a party to land at ore quay.

The German destroyers had put their troops ashore as planned, during the 9th, and by midnight, three of them, the *Zenker, Giese, Koellner*, were lying in Herjangs Fjord, off Elvegaard ; four more, the *Heidkamp, Schmitt, Lüdemann* and *Künne*, had made fast alongside the pier in Narvik harbour, and two others, the *Thiele* and *Von Arnim*, were at anchor off Ballangen about 15 miles to the west of Narvik. The *Roeder* had been ordered to patrol the outer reaches of the fjord as a protection against submarines, but at dawn, on the 10th, she entered Narvik Harbour, anchoring at 0420 off the eastern shore. Ten minutes later, at 0430, the British flotilla made the first of its three attacks. The *Hardy, Hunter* and *Havock* went in and engaged the German destroyers alongside the pier with guns and torpedoes ; a torpedo from the *Hardy* hit the *Heidkamp* aft, blowing off its stern and killing the German Captain (D), Commodore Bonte.

The *Anton Schmitt* was hit by one torpedo in the forward engine room, and by a second in the after boiler room, which sealed her fate ; she broke in two and sank.

The *Roeder* was hit by two shells which set her on fire and destroyed the fire control equipment. The other two destroyers (*Lüdemann* and *Künne*) in the harbour tried to cast off when the alarm was first given, but both received hits which temporarily disabled them.

In the harbour at anchor were some 23 merchant ships,[1] and heavy explosions marked the end of six of the German ships. One, the *Neuenfels*, had been run ashore on 9th April, and one, the *Jan Wellem*, 11, 776 tons (a whale depot ship in service as submarine supply ship) remained undamaged.

Meanwhile, in the mist and snow, the *Hotspur* and *Hostile*, outside the harbour, did not discover the three destroyers in Herjangs Fjord. They joined the *Hardy* in the second attack and the *Hotspur* torpedoed two merchantmen. Captain Warburton-Lee then drew off for a short consultation. The German ships had returned the fire, but had done no harm with either guns or torpedoes and their guns were apparently silenced. After an hour's fighting, no ships had appeared outside. Accordingly the flotilla went in again, this time keeping a mile outside the harbour, except the *Hostile*, which stood in to the entrance to fire her torpedoes.

So far, things had gone well. They had, without loss to themselves, sunk two destroyers, the *Schmitt* and the *Heidkamp*, and put out of action three more inside the harbour, besides sinking half a dozen merchant ships. Their good fortune was now to change ; as the flotilla drew off after the last attack, to proceed down Ofot Fjord, they sighted, just before 0600, fresh ships coming from Herjangs Fjord. Captain Warburton-Lee reported them as a cruiser and three destroyers, adding ' am withdrawing to westward '. In actual fact they were the three destroyers, *Wolfgang Zenker*, *Erich Giese* and *Erich Koellner*, which after disembarking their troops had anchored off Elvegaard. It was not until about 0520 that they received the message sent out by the *Lüdemann* : ' Alarm : attack on Narvik '. Weighing anchor immediately, they made at full speed in the direction of Narvik, sighting the British force at 0540. The *Hardy* and her accompanying destroyers increased speed from 15 knots to 30 knots, engaging the new enemy at a range of some 7,000 yards. Then out of the mist ahead appeared two more ships three or four miles off, apparently coming in from the sea. At first it was hoped in the *Hardy* that the newcomers might be British cruisers ; they were in fact the German destroyers *Bernd von Arnim* and *Georg Thiele*, which had been lying at anchor to the west of Narvik in Ballangen Fjord. It was not long before the heavier German guns[2] began to take their toll ; they disabled the *Hardy*, which beached herself on the south shore of Ofot Fjord, 7 miles from Narvik.[3] They sank the *Hunter* and disabled the *Hotspur* which drifted on to her sinking consort, exposed to the fire of four enemies, before she managed to get clear. The *Hostile* and *Havock*, 2 miles ahead and practically untouched, turned round to help. The Germans, says Commander Wright of the *Hostile*, were ' zigzagging across the *Hotspur*'s rear, doing target practice at her at a range of about 8,000 yards, surrounding her with splashes ' ; but the German ships had not escaped damage, and at 0625 the *Thiele* and *Arnim* retired with some of their guns out of action ; the remaining destroyers also soon fell back and the three British ships withdrew unhindered. Thus the fight ended at 0630. Half an hour later, as they were on their way out some 25 miles west of Narvik, a large ship appeared out of the snow and mist. This was the German ammunition ship *Rauenfels*. The

[1] British 5, Swedish 5, Norwegian 4, Dutch 1, German 8. (B.R. 1337, Merchant Ship Losses, 1946). The German ships were apparently the *Aachen*, *Altona*, *Bockenheim*, *Frielinghaus*, *Hein Hoyer*, *Jan Wellem* (undamaged), *Martha Hendrik Fisser*, *Neuenfels* (beached). (War Diary, April 1940, p. 288.)

[2] The German destroyers all had five 5-in. guns. The British destroyers had four 4.7-in. guns except the *Hardy*, which had five 4.7-in.

[3] The *Hardy* floated off next high water, and drifted ashore 2½ miles to the eastward, near Skjomnes, where she remained a wreck.

Havock opened fire ; she ran herself ashore on the south side of the fjord and blew up when a benzine tank was hit. The loss of her supplies was severely felt by the Germans.

Of the British force, two ships had been sunk, one disabled and its gallant leader killed.[1] German casualties[2] were two destroyers sunk and five damaged ; the flotilla had also destroyed half a dozen merchantmen, in addition to the *Rauenfels*, but unfortunately not the large supply ship *Jan Wellem*, which had been lying by the pier and provided stores for many a day.

14. Operations in Vest Fjord area, 10th-12th April [PLANS 9, 12

Admiral Whitworth received Captain Warburton-Lee's signal, that a cruiser was chasing the flotilla, soon after 0600, the 10th. He sent in the *Penelope* to help, at the same time ordering the four destroyers of his screen to join her, and he told Captain Yates of the *Penelope* ' support retirement of 2nd Destroyer Flotilla, counter-attacking enemy force as necessary. Then establish a patrol off the minefield with the object of preventing further enemy forces reaching Narvik '. Captain Bickford, already by the minefield, sent in his only fully-armed ship, the *Greyhound*, on his own account at 0800, and she met Commander Layman's three ships near Tranoy about an hour and a half later. Commander Layman then decided to go in the *Hotspur* to Skjel Fjord, 50 miles away to the westward in the Lofoten Islands, taking also the *Hostile* to look after the cripple. Captain Yates agreeing when he came up about 1100, the two ships made their way to that haven, which was soon to shelter other cripples.

Admiral Whitworth elaborated his arrangements in the following signal to Captain Yates, timed 1116/10 :—

> ' Present situation. Enemy forces in Narvik consist of one cruiser, five destroyers and one submarine. Troop transports may be expected to arrive through Vest Fjord or through Inner Leads, disregarding minefield.
>
> Your object is to prevent reinforcements reaching Narvik. Establish a destroyer patrol between positions 67° 47′ N., 14° 20′ E., and 68° 2′ N., 13° 40′ E., one destroyer also to patrol north-east of minefield during daylight.
>
> Enemy submarine may operate in Vest Fjord. Enemy may debouch in force to attempt to drive you off prior to his reinforcements arriving. Establish warning and A/S patrol 30 miles north-eastward of your patrol line.
>
> *Renown* and *Repulse*, unescorted, will operate in vicinity of 67° N., 10° E.
>
> Report your dispositions.
>
> Oiler *British Lady*, escorted by *Grenade*, *Encounter*, are due Skjel Fjord, 68° N., 13° 15′ E., p.m. 12th April. This fjord may be used for *Hotspur* if required.'

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[1] H.M. The King approved the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to Captain Warburton-Lee.

[2] Losses and damage inflicted by the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla at Narvik on 10th April 1940.

Wilhelm Heidkamp out of action, Captain (D), Commodore Bonte, killed : sunk on the morning of the 11th April, 81 dead.

Anton Schmitt sunk, 50 dead.

Diether Von Roeder, hit five times by gunfire ; boiler room 2 out of action ; severe damage to the ship's side ; no longer seaworthy, 13 dead.

Hans Lüdemann, hits on No. 1 Gun and Compartment III. No. 1 Gun out of action ; fire in Compartment III, magazine flooded, 2 dead.

Hermann Kunne, damaged by splinters ; so badly shaken by the torpedo explosion on *Anton Schmitt*, which lay alongside her, that the main and auxiliary engines and electrical equipment were rendered useless until after the battle, 9 dead.

Georg Thiele, seven hits by gunfire ; fire control apparatus and No. 1 gun disabled ; magazine flooded, fires in both the forward and after parts of the ship, 13 dead.

Bernd Von Arnim, five hits by gunfire ; boilers, 3, 2 out of action ; seaworthiness reduced by hits on the ship's side and forecastle, 2 dead.

Wolfgang Zenker, *Erich Giese*, *Erich Koellner* } No damage or losses. Roughly 50 per cent of their ammunition used.

The destroyer patrol line was 20 miles long, right across Vest Fjord, roughly 10 miles above Skjel Fjord on the north and the minefield on the south side. As it turned out, the *Greyhound* and *Havock* attacked a submarine during the afternoon near the mouth of Vest Fjord, Captain Yates having sent them down the fjord before receiving the above signal ; whereupon Admiral Whitworth ordered them to hunt ' for at least 24 hours—submarine must on no account be allowed to escape '. This left the four big destroyers and the three minelayers at Captain Yates's disposal.

At 1254, however, Admiral Whitworth received a signal (timed 0808/10) from the Commander-in-Chief, ordering him to ' concentrate on allowing no force from Narvik to escape '. As this changed the object, so Admiral Whitworth changed his dispositions (1511/10 to *Penelope*) :—

> ' Your object is now to prevent escape of enemy forces from Narvik through Vest Fjord or possibly through Tjeldsundet. Endeavour to maintain a warning destroyer patrol south of Tjeldoy with your main force north-west of Tranoy. If this position is untenable in dark hours, withdraw to south-westward of Tranoy.
>
> You have freedom to alter these dispositions according to weather, local conditions, and enemy counter moves.'

That evening the Admiralty informed the Commander-in-Chief of the policy for the immediate future in A.T. 1904/10, of which the following is an extract :—

> ' As enemy is now established at Narvik, recapture of that place takes priority over operations against Bergen and Trondheim. Expedition is being prepared as quickly as possible, and you will be further informed when plan and time table are completed. In the meantime it is of primary importance to prevent Narvik's being reinforced by sea. Possibility of seizing and holding a temporary base near Narvik with small military force is under urgent examination : in the meantime, you will presumably arrange for a temporary refuelling anchorage in the north. As Narvik must also be of primary importance to the Germans, it seems possible that battlecruisers may turn up there.'

But the Admiralty was anxious to try another naval attack without delay on the enemy ships (believed to consist of two cruisers and half a dozen destroyers) at Narvik, and had already ordered Admiral Layton to send three ships of the 18th Cruiser Squadron—then on their way to Scapa—with eight destroyers, as soon as they had completed with fuel. These orders were countermanded, as Admiral Layton's ships would be needed to conduct the expedition mentioned in A.T. 1904/10 (above), and the *Penelope* was told off instead (A.T. 2012/10) :—

> ' If, in light of experience this morning, you consider it a justifiable operation, take available destroyers in Narvik area and attack enemy tonight or tomorrow morning.'

And Captain Yates answered (*Penelope* to Admiralty, 2310/10) :—

> ' Consider attack is justifiable, although element of surprise has been lost. Navigation dangerous from wrecks of ships sunk today, eliminating chance of successful night attack. Propose attacking at dawn on Friday (12th), since operation orders cannot be got out and issued for tomorrow in view of present disposition of destroyers on patrol.'

These signals came to Admiral Whitworth for information only. Still, he felt bound to point out that the ships under his orders had been given three different things to do : to prevent the Germans from escaping from Narvik, to prevent fresh forces from joining them, and to attack them there. ' In my view ', he says, ' the situation required clarifying ', so he made this signal to the Admiralty, timed 2219 :—

> ' Your 2012/10th April to *Penelope* appears to conflict with the policy outlined in your 1904/10th April, not to *Penelope*, which, in my view, is the correct one under the circumstances.
>
> Further casualties to ships now under my command will jeopardize the prevention of reinforcements reaching Narvik.'

The Admiralty stood by their plan, telling Captain Yates they should ' back whatever decision you make ' and approving his attack at dawn on the 12th. But certain occurrences during the night 10th/11th April, reported by the *Bedouin*, Senior Officer in Ofot Fjord, raised misgivings, and at 0930, 11th, Captain Yates signalled to the Admiralty :—

> ' Senior Officer, Destroyers, reports, while on patrol last night south of Tjeldoy, he approached Baroy Island Light. Several loud explosions took place in his vicinity. The explosions were of a different character and appeared to indicate controlled minefield and shore-fired magnetic torpedoes. Activity was also observed ashore at Baroy Island. The indications were that shore defences were fully prepared. He withdrew his patrol to south-west. He is of opinion that the operation on the lines of yesterday's attack could not be carried out effectively.
>
> In light of this report, I concur, and regret I must reverse decision given in my 2310/10.'

Nevertheless, the Admiralty still hoped to bring off this attack. They told Captain Yates to ' have all preliminary preparations made in case carrying out of attack on enemy forces in Narvik is ordered '. Unhappily, the *Penelope* ran on shore that afternoon on her way to Bodo, and was out of action in consequence for a long time to come. Next day the Admiralty ordered an attack on a different scale.

Rumours of German reinforcements had reached Admiral Whitworth in the meantime through Commander Wright at Skjel Fjord. The Norwegian police there told him that a man-of-war had been seen in the evening of the 10th in Tennholm Fjord, some 50 miles south of the minefield ; that a large German tanker was lying there, hoping for a pilot to take her to Narvik ; and that several big German merchantmen ' believed to be transports ' had arrived at Bodo, at the mouth of Vest Fjord. The Admiral ' considered the first duty of the force under my command remained the prevention of reinforcements reaching Narvik, of which these were apparently some. It also seemed possible that the ships were unloading at Bodo '. Accordingly, he told Captain Yates to ' get a pilot at Tranoy. Take two destroyers and firstly attack enemy transports reported at Bodo . . . and secondly, try and capture tanker at Tennholm . . . Warship reported at Tennholm must be considered. You should endeavour to be back on your patrol by dark today ', the 11th—this last, presumably, that the *Penelope* should be in time to attack Narvik next morning. Then, ' lest there should be doubt as to his first object ' Admiral Whitworth added, ' attack on enemy transports must take precedence over attack on Narvik '. The *Penelope* took the *Eskimo* and *Kimberley* with her ; but failed to find a pilot at Tranoy, Captain Yates went on to try at Fleinvaer, a few miles from Bodo at the mouth of the outer fjords, meaning to go in without a pilot should he fail again in finding one. There, however, about 1500, the 11th, the *Penelope* struck a rock. She soon floated off, but had injured herself seriously, and made her way to Skjel Fjord in tow of the *Eskimo* with considerable difficulty. Meanwhile, Captain Yates sent the *Kimberley* up to Bodo, where she learnt that one German merchant ship only had been to the port since the invasion, and that was the *Alster*, which the *Icarus* had captured early that morning while patrolling near the minefield in Vest Fjord with the other minelayers.[1]

[1] The *Alster* had sailed from Brunsbüttel with the motor transport for Narvik on 3rd April. She left Bodo p.m. 10th, and the *Icarus* turned her over to a guard from the *Penelope* at Skjel Fjord before that ship sailed for Bodo on the 11th. The mechanical transport was turned over to the Norwegians ; the *Alster* was used to hoist out the *Eskimo*'s mountings after the second Battle of Narvik, and subsequently to load and bring down a cargo of iron ore from Kirkenes. The Norwegians sank the tanker (the *Kattegat*) reported in Tennholm Fjord (*see* Secs. 1 and 21 *postea*).

The remaining destroyers continued to cruise that day 'to prevent reinforcements reaching Narvik'. Admiral Whitworth gave orders to Captain Bickford 'to control Vest Fjord' north-eastward of the patrol line he had prescribed in his orders to Captain Yates the day before, and to station a warning patrol between Tranoy and Tjeldoy. The Admiral himself continued off the Lofoten Islands with the two capital ships, stretching some 80 miles to the westward of Skomvaer. An Admiralty report of a possible German rendezvous in 67° N. between 4° 30′ E. and 6° E. sent him further west to patrol to the northward of this position during the night (11th/12th); next morning he joined the Commander-in-Chief, who had been moving north from the Trondheim area.[1]

15. Movements of Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, 10th-12th April

[PLANS 3, 4

Meanwhile the Commander-in-Chief held his north-easterly course throughout the 10th April, altering to the eastward at 2000 that evening for a position some 90 miles north-west of Trondheim, whence the *Furious* was to fly off her aircraft to carry out the attack arranged between the Commander-in-Chief and the Admiralty, on the enemy ships there. These, according to R.A.F. reports consisted of two cruisers, besides destroyers and merchantmen. The last report received before the attack, timed 1645, 10th, placed a 'Hipper' class ship at anchor off the town, and a 'Nürnberg' at the head of the narrows in Trondheim Fjord, 10 miles to the westward.

In fact, when this report was made, the German units in Trondheim consisted of the *Hipper* and four destroyers, the *Paul Jacobi, Theodor Riedel, Friedrich Eckholdt* and *Bruno Heineman*. They had entered the fjord in the early hours of the 9th and by midnight had put all their troops ashore. On the 10th at 1500 the *Hipper* and three of the destroyers were ordered to leave that night and return to Germany, but shortage of fuel prevented this, and eventually at 2100, 10th, the *Hipper* got under way, accompanied only by the *Eckholdt*. There was some delay owing to a submarine alarm in the fjord, and it was not till 0200, 11th, that she passed through Ramsöy Fjord (63° 30′ N., 8° 12′ E.)—which had been chosen as being less likely to be patrolled by the enemy, owing to its navigational difficulties—and shaped a north-westerly course at high speed to get clear of the land. The *Eckholdt* was ordered back to Trondheim, as she was unable to keep up in the heavy sea. It is interesting to note that had the *Hipper* been a couple of hours earlier her diversionary course would have taken her straight into Admiral Forbes' fleet on its easterly course at about 0200; as it was she passed unseen some 25 to 30 miles to the westward, while the *Furious* was flying off, and, passing through the waters lately traversed by the fleet, turned to the southward for Germany at 0740.

Accordingly when the 18 machines with torpedoes left the *Furious* at about 0400, in 64° 30′ N., 8° E., some 90 miles from the town, to attack the German units reported in Trondheim they found the enemy cruiser—or as they believed, the two enemy cruisers—gone. While the fleet cruised north and south of the carrier, with a few destroyers watching the entrance to Fro Havet, the northern approach to Trondheim, the *Furious*'s airmen could see below them in the fjord only two destroyers and a submarine, besides merchantmen. The third destroyer seems to have escaped detection, and the other, the *Eckholdt* which had set out with the *Hipper* on the previous night, did not return until 0530

[1] *See* Sec. 15 *postea*.

that morning. The British aircraft attacked both the destroyers they had sighted, but several torpedoes grounded in shallow water, exploding before they reached their targets and the attack was without success.

The ' disappointing result ' caused Admiral Forbes to order a ' proper reconnaissance ' of Trondheim by two machines, armed with bombs to attack the men-of-war after they had reported what they found in the fjords : they sighted two destroyers, one of which they attacked unsuccessfully, some seaplanes, and a few merchant vessels.

The result was disappointing indeed ; yet it was not the airmen's fault, as Captain Troubridge of the *Furious* pointed out in his letter of proceedings. At the end of the month, when the *Furious* went home, he wrote of these young officers and men ; ' All were firing their first shot, whether torpedo, bomb, or machinegun, in action ; many made their first night landing on 11th April (sc. 12th—after their first attack at Narvik), and, undeterred by the loss of several of their shipmates, their honour and courage remained throughout as dazzling as the snow-covered mountains over which they so triumphantly flew '—a tribute reminiscent of Lord St. Vincent's saying of an earlier Thomas Troubridge that ' his honour was bright as his sword '.

While the fleet was cruising in the offing during these air operations a report of a merchant ship near Mausundvaer (63° 51′ N., 8° 45′ E.) in the north-west approaches to Trondheim was received. The *Isis* (Commander Clouston, S.O.) and *Ilex* were ordered to proceed through Fröy Fjord to investigate. Having searched in the reported vicinity and the southern part of Fro Havet without success, Commander Clouston decided to carry out a reconnaissance up Inner Trondheim Lead and Skjorn Fjord, to investigate the outer limit of the defences in Trondheim approach.[1] Several German aircraft were sighted, but no opposition from shore defences was encountered till shortly after entering Trondheim Fjord at 1320, when fire was opened from Brettingsnes, then abaft the port beam, at a range of about 3000 yards. Commander Clouston at once altered course to seaward and a smart engagement ensued, the destroyers engaging the battery with H.E. as they retired under smoke, up to a range of 10,000 yards. Though narrowly missed, neither ship was hit, and Commander Clouston gained the impression that the battery lacked modern fire control equipment. Course was then shaped through Fro Havet to rejoin the Commander-in-Chief.

On the return of the reconnoitring aircraft, the Commander-in-Chief shaped course to the northward towards Narvik, intending to launch an air attack on the enemy Captain Warburton-Lee had fought the morning before. At 1500, 11th April, Vice-Admiral Cunningham with the *Devonshire, Berwick, Inglefield* and *Imogen,* was detached to search the Inner Lead from Trondheim to Vest Fjord, with instructions to mop up any enemy ships found there. The *Isis* and *Ilex,* then on their way back from Trondheim, were ordered to join this force. The search was carried up to lat. 66° 17′ N., by the next day and later on north of Narvik as far as Tromsö, but no enemy was encountered.

Half an hour after Admiral Cunningham parted company, enemy air attacks on the fleet started and continued till 1700. The destroyer *Eclipse* was hit and her engine room flooded. The *York, Escort* and *Hyperion* were detailed to stand by her and escort her to Lerwick, where she eventually arrived in tow of the *Escort* on the 17th.

While these attacks were in progress, the Admiralty informed the Commander-in-Chief (A.T. 1607/11) of a possible enemy rendezvous in the coming

[1] *See* Plan 11.

twenty-four hours in 67° N., between 4° 30′ E., and 6° E. This position was about 150 miles to the north-westward of the Commander-in-Chief, and about half that distance to the south-westward of Vice-Admiral Whitworth, who reported that he was in 67° 50′ N., 8° 11′ E., at 1741, steering 235° at 24 knots. That night (11th/12th) the Vice-Admiral patrolled to the northward of the possible rendezvous, while the Commander-in-Chief having reached 65° 43′ N., 8° 50′ E., at 2000, steered 290° (taking him about 45 miles to the southward of it) till 0445, 12th, when he altered course to the northward to join the battle cruisers. The junction was effected at 0730 in about 67° N., 6° E. Nothing was seen of any enemy ships ; on the contrary, Air Force reports which soon began to come in placed both German battlecruisers and one cruiser in 57° 31′ N., 4° 52′ E. (off the south-west corner of Norway) at 0857, 12th, steering 142° at 15 knots. The battlecruisers ' had thus managed to pass all the way from north of the Lofoten Islands to the Skagerrak without being sighted by any of our air or surface vessels ',[1] and were then beyond our reach, almost back in their home waters. A brief account of their movements during the invasion period will be found in the following section.

16. Movements of German naval forces, 9th–13th April [PLANS 3, 4

After outdistancing the *Renown* in the morning of the 9th April, Admiral Lütjens with the *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* had stood to the northward till 1200, when course was altered to west along the parallel 70° N. The general situation as he knew it decided Admiral Lütjens to make the return journey to Germany independently of the Narvik and Trondheim groups, keeping well to the westward and after turning homeward passing close to the Shetlands. Owing to a technical defect in the *Gneisenau* the signal which he sent giving this intention failed to reach the Naval Group Command, West, and at 0800, 10th April, the latter asked him to report his position and intentions. Admiral Lütjens was then in position 69° N., 5° 30′ W. (to the north-east of Iceland) ; he did not wish to give away his position, so at noon sent the *Scharnhorst's* aircraft to Trondheim with orders to make the report called for three hours after leaving him. This report crossed a signal sent by Group Command, West, at 1500 :—

> ' All available cruisers, destroyers and torpedo boats are to proceed to sea tonight. Narvik destroyers are to concentrate with the Commander-in-Chief. It is left to your discretion whether *Hipper* with three destroyers join you or break through and proceed direct to Home port.'

The Narvik destroyers were unable to put to sea, partly owing to damage inflicted by the 2nd Flotilla, but mainly owing to shortage of fuel ; they consequently remained in Narvik, with disastrous results to themselves (*see* Sec. 18 *postea*).

Admiral Lütjens anticipated an alteration to these orders as a result of his signal by the aircraft, but he altered course at 1630 to 105° and steered for the rendezvous between Vest Fjord and Trondheim. When at 2238, 10th, he received the expected approval of his intentions, he altered course to the south-west, and at 0400, 11th—just as the *Hipper* was clearing the Home Fleet 300 miles to the eastward, and the *Furious* was flying off for the abortive attack on Trondheim—he hauled round to the southward. Admiral Lütjens was aware from enemy reports that the main British naval concentration

[1] Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet's report. The Commander-in-Chief was of course working on the identification of the two German battle cruisers by Admiral Whitworth's force on 9th April as one battlecruiser and one cruiser.

was off the Norwegian coast, in the Trondheim and Lofoten areas ; this, combined with the weather—rain and short visibility—facilitated the passage of the battlecruisers, and at 1200, 11th, being then some 75 miles to the northward of the Faeroes, they altered course for home, and passing 40 miles to the eastward of the Shetlands during the night of the 11th/12th, effected a rendezvous with the *Hipper* at 0830, 12th. It was at this moment that the British reconnaissance aircraft appeared, and shortly afterwards intercepted messages warned the Germans that bombers were on their way to attack them, but the weather seriously deteriorated, visibility fell to under a mile and no contact occurred. That evening the formation reached the Jade without incident.

Mention has been made of how the cruisers at Bergen, Kristiansand and Oslo fared ; the only other important unit—the *Lützow*—after the check at Dröbak on the 9th April, had anchored off Oslo in the forenoon of the 10th. That afternoon she left for the return journey to Kiel ; owing to the danger of enemy submarines, she proceeded southwards at high speed through the western waters of the Skagerrak. On 11th April, at 0029, a torpedo, fired by the British submarine *Spearfish*, struck the *Lützow* aft, seriously damaging and putting out of action her rudder and propellers, tearing a considerable hole in the ship's side and flooding the after part. The ship drifted before the wind in a south-westerly direction, towards the Skaw, heavily down by the stern. At 0400 she was met by boats of the 17th A/S Flotilla, and the 19th Minesweeper Flotilla, which formed an A/S escort, took her in tow, and kept her head round, for it was feared that the heavy sea then running would break her stern right off. Most of the crew were taken off by patrol boats ; the *Lützow* eventually reached Kiel on the evening of the 13th, and was out of action for twelve months.

17. *Furious* aircraft attack at Narvik, 12th April [PLANS 4, 12

After meeting Vice-Admiral Whitworth in the morning of 12th April, the Commander-in-Chief steered to the northward for the Lofoten area. Detachments were again reducing the strength with the flag. The *York* and two destroyers escorting the damaged *Eclipse* had left the fleet the previous afternoon, as had two other destroyers sent in to fuel. Vice-Admiral Cunningham's force was still searching the fjords. And from this time another commitment was influencing the Commander-in-Chief's dispositions—the hastily organised Allied expeditions to Norway. These will be dealt with separately,[1] but the first convoy (N.P.1) consisting of the s.s. *Empress of Australia*, *Monarch of Bermuda*, and *Reina del Pacifico* had sailed from the Clyde on 11th April, being joined next day off Cape Wrath by the s.s. *Batory* and *Chrobry* from Scapa, and was steering for Narvik accompanied by Vice-Admiral Layton in the *Manchester*, with the *Birmingham*, *Cairo*, five destroyers and the *Protector*.[2] On the same day (12th) General Mackesy, commanding the land forces, with an advance party consisting of half a battalion of the Scots Guards, sailed from Scapa in the *Southampton*, and Admiral of the Fleet the Earl of Cork and Orrery hoisted his flag in the *Aurora*[3] and sailed from Rosyth to take charge of the naval side of

[1] *See* Chapter III *postea*.

[2] The convoy was joined by the repair ship *Vindictive* with six destroyers on the 13th April.

[3] Admiral Sir Edward Evans had left the *Aurora* on her arrival at Scapa in the evening of the 10th April and proceeded by air to Stockholm with an Allied Anglo-French Mission to establish contact with the Norwegian Authorities. On the conclusion of the work of the Mission he was again sent to Scandinavia on a special mission from the British Government to the King of Norway.

the combined operations at Narvik,[1] though news of this appointment did not reach the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, till the early hours of the 14th (A.T. 2314/13).

In order to ensure the safe passage of Convoy N.P.1, the Commander-in-Chief detached the *Valiant, Repulse,* and three destroyers in the afternoon of 12th April, with orders to meet it, after which the *Valiant* was to provide cover to Vaags Fjord, while the *Repulse* and destroyers proceeded to the base for fuel.

Thus in the afternoon of 12th April, the Commander-in-Chief had with him only the *Rodney, Warspite, Renown, Furious* and six destroyers, while twelve destroyers were working in the southern approaches to Narvik.[2]

With this force the Commander-in-Chief arrived off the Lofoten Islands to support the *Furious,* whose aircraft were to attack Narvik. The aircraft were to make a dive-bombing attack on the shipping that evening, the 12th, and to photograph the port and its approaches, leaving their ship in roughly 68° N., 11° E., with a flight of 150 miles or so each way ; and the Commander-in-Chief told the *Furious,* ' Attack on ships in Narvik to be pressed home and hope to hear all ships, including merchant ships which are either transports or storeships, have been sunk ; no shore A.A. batteries so far as known, and most of enemy destroyers badly mauled '. The *Renown* and three destroyers stood by the *Furious* during the attack, while the Commander-in-Chief stretched 40 to 50 miles to seaward and back with the *Rodney* and *Warspite,* screened by the other three destroyers in the fleet. The leading squadron of aircraft left the ship soon after 1600, dropped their bombs at heights between 1,200 and 400 ft., claiming four hits on German destroyers,[3] and arrived on board again a little after 2000, just four hours from their setting out. They lost two out of the eight machines through the enemy's fire, but saved both crews. Lieut.-Commander Sydney-Turner remarked that his attack ' was carried out in conditions of which the squadron had had no previous experience and without a reconnaissance, which would have been extremely valuable in deciding tactics of approach. The only maps available were photographic reproductions of Admiralty charts, which showed no contours '. The other squadron, starting forty minutes later, had the worst of the weather and turned back near Baroy Island. ' Ceiling now 100 ft., visibility 250 yards, very heavy snowstorms ', said their commander. They got back in the dark at 2030.

18. Second Battle of Narvik, 13th April 1940 [PLAN 10

Soon after he gave his instructions for the air attack, the Commander-in-Chief had a signal from the Admiralty to attempt Narvik again by sea :—' Orders for cleaning up enemy naval forces and batteries in Narvik by using a battleship heavily escorted by destroyers, with synchronized dive-bombing attacks from *Furious* '. Accordingly, he planned an attack for the following day by the *Warspite* and nine destroyers under Admiral Whitworth. The squadron would

[1] The following force came under Lord Cork's command when within 100 miles of Vaags Fjord : *Effingham, Enterprise, Cairo, Vindictive, Protector* and auxiliary craft, and the convoy destroyers ; also the *Aurora* and *Southampton* until the troops in Convoy N.P.1 had landed, when these two ships rejoined the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet. The *Protector* was to return to Rosyth after net laying.

[2] The number of Narvik destroyers includes the *Grenade* and *Encounter,* which arrived at Skjel Fjord with the oiler *British Lady* p.m. 12th.

[3] According to the Germans, no hits were obtained on the destroyers ; some casualties, mostly on land, were caused by splinters.

assemble at 0730, the 13th, in 67° 44′ N., 13° 22′ E. inside Vest Fjord, a hundred miles from Narvik, and go in with some destroyers ahead sweeping and the others forming an anti-submarine screen for the *Warspite*—the sweeps to be hauled in when within 10 miles of Narvik. The *Warspite* would go ' to a position 5 miles from Narvik, depending on circumstances, and from there cover the advance of the destroyers into the harbour and adjacent waters where enemy ships may be located '. The *Furious*, cruising outside with the Commander-in-Chief, had orders to send aircraft to attack shore defences supposed to be on Baroy Island and by Ramnes and the opposite shore in the narrows of Ofot Fjord, and others to attack the ships and batteries in and near Narvik. These attacks would ' synchronize with *Warspite*'s approach ' and had stated times in the orders, which Admiral Whitworth was to alter should there be need ; but he managed to keep them unchanged. The Commander-in-Chief with the *Rodney, Renown, Furious* and five destroyers would cruise outside the Lofoten Islands some 30 miles off shore, in the vicinity of 68° N., 11° 30′ E. There were also four destroyers at or near Skjel Fjord.[1]

Admiral Whitworth shifted his flag to the *Warspite* in the night, 12th/13th, after the *Renown* and *Furious* returned to the fleet, and sailed for the rendezvous inside Vest Fjord with the *Cossack, Hero, Foxhound* and *Forester*. There the *Bedouin* and *Punjabi, Kimberley* and *Icarus* joined, while the ninth destroyer, the *Eskimo*, remained patrolling near Tranoy Light, some 60 miles farther in. This was fortunate, for shortly before 1100, the 13th, she sighted a submarine between her and the squadron, then just coming in sight. The submarine dived, and the *Eskimo* and some destroyers of the screen drove it down with depth charges over the area from which it could threaten the *Warspite*. A bomber from the *Furious* duly met the squadron off Baroy soon after 1200, but neither the aircraft nor the *Warspite* could see anything to attack there. Soon afterwards the blackened bow of the *Rauenfels* was passed, a grim reminder of what lay before them. Meanwhile the *Warspite* had sent up her own aircraft to scout, a service it did to perfection. ' I doubt ', says the Vice-Admiral, ' if ever a shipborne aircraft has been used to such good purpose '. It first reported a German destroyer off Hamnesholm in the narrows, a dozen miles above the squadron, then another beyond the narrows : these were the *Hermann Künne*, and the *Erich Koellner*. The *Koellner*, although undamaged in the engagement on the 10th, had run aground in Ballangen Fjord shortly before midnight on the 11th ; the damage sustained was severe and the ship was no longer seaworthy. Accordingly, it was decided to anchor her off Taarstad where she was to be used as a barrage-battery ; she was on the way thither, escorted by the *Künne*, when sighted by the *Warspite*'s aircraft. The *Künne* immediately retired before the British ships, exchanging fire at 12,000 yards, the limit of visibility ; the captain of the *Koellner*, realising that he could not accept action, headed for Djupvik Bay, on the south shore of the fjord (68° 24′ N., 16° 47′ E.), hoping from this position, at a range of 3,000 to 4,000 yards, to be able to use his torpedoes against the approaching squadron, before it could sight him and open fire. The *Warspite*'s aircraft had meanwhile flown to the head of Herjangs Fjord, 20 miles off, where it bombed and sank a submarine, the *U.64*, which fired at and hit the aircraft. On its way back, it sighted the *Koellner* putting into Djupvik Bay, and its signals enabled the leading British ships to train guns and tubes to starboard, ready to engage the

[1] Admiral Whitworth's force was as follows : *Warspite* (Captain Crutchley), *Bedouin* (Commander McCoy), *Cossack* (Commander Sherbrooke), *Eskimo* (Commander Micklethwait), *Punjabi* (Commander Lean), *Hero* (Commander Biggs), *Icarus* (Lieut.-Commander Maud), *Kimberley* (Lieut.-Commander Knowling), *Forester* (Lieut.-Commander Tancock), *Foxhound* (Lieut.-Commander Peters).

enemy the moment they passed the mouth of the bay. The *Koellner* fired her torpedoes and one salvo from her guns and was then smothered by the British fire ; in addition, both the *Bedouin* and the *Eskimo* hit her with torpedoes, while her own torpedoes missed.[1]

It was then nearly 1330. The British ships were a dozen miles from Narvik, looking for the German destroyers in the haze ahead. When the *Künne* first sighted the British at the entrance to Ofot Fjord, she had signalled a warning to the other six destroyers, which were all at anchor in Narvik harbour. The S.O. of the 4th German Destroyer Flotilla, Captain Bey, who had taken over command of the group when Commodore Bonte was killed on the 10th, immediately ordered them to put out to meet the enemy. The *Hans Lüdemann* was the first to leave, followed by the *Wolfgang Zenker*, and shortly afterwards by the *Bernd von Arnim ;* the *Thiele* and the *Giese* had not got sufficient steam to leave and the *Diether von Roeder* was too badly damaged to move. *U.51*, in harbour at the time, submerged, under the impression that it was an air-raid, but evidently put out into Vest Fjord later on.

As the three German destroyers left the harbour they met the *Künne*, and all four turned so as to fire their torpedoes. Commander Biggs of the *Hero* describes the action outside Narvik harbour in the following words :—

> ' From 1300 to 1355, *Hero* engaged three separate enemy destroyers with her two foremost guns at ranges between 10,000 and 15,000 yards. During this period it is estimated that only six hits were obtained on enemy ships. This was largely due to the large number of ships firing at a few enemy destroyers from practically the same bearing, which made the picking out of own fall of shot extremely difficult. It was also due to the fact that only the two foremost guns could be brought into action, owing to the restriction imposed by the *Hero*'s being guide of the fleet and also employed on sweeping duties.
>
> Owing to her duties as guide of the fleet, which necessitated long periods on a steady course at a steady speed, *Hero* appeared to be practically continuously under fire, but the ship was not hit except for one small splinter.'

The German destroyers outside the harbour, which were later joined by the *Thiele*, were gradually forced back ; German reports claim, however, that up to this point, after an engagement lasting 1½ hours, with the exception of the *Koellner*, sunk in Djupvik Bay, none of their destroyers had been hit. If this was the case, their end came all very suddenly ; at 1350 they received the order : ' Retire up Rombaks Fjord '.[2] The *Künne* apparently failed to pick up this message, for she made for Herjangs Fjord ; there she beached herself off Troldvik, and her crew were sent to reinforce the 139th German Mountain Regiment, which was defending the area north of Narvik. The *Eskimo*, following hard in her track, came up and torpedoed her, while the other British units were attacking the *Giese*, which had just raised enough steam to leave harbour : her guns were silenced and she was set on fire in a few minutes, close inshore, north of the harbour, where her captain gave the order to abandon ship at 1330. The *Punjabi* was badly hit at this time and withdrew with main steampipe and guns out of action, but reported herself fit for service an hour later. The *Warspite* was engaging the enemy whenever a target presented itself but, owing to the smoke of the destroyer engagement, fire was intermittent. Speed was adjusted to maintain support of the destroyers, and to keep the flagship clear of the torpedo danger as far as possible.

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[1] The *Warspite*'s aircraft thus played its part in carrying out the following clause in the orders : ' It is specially important that destroyers sighted should be engaged before they can fire torpedoes at *Warspite* '. The *Penelope*, lying disabled at Skjel Fjord, also signalled reports she received of the enemy's leaving Narvik (*Penelope* to *Eskimo*, 1155/13).

[2] By this time the German destroyers were practically out of ammunition, having expended a good deal in the action of 10th April.

According to the plan of attack, aircraft from the *Furious* should have joined the battle at this stage. Her aircraft had come punctually over Baroy Island, but the one for Ramnes and Hamnesholm had failed to get beyond Baroy, the weather being very thick when it arrived there. The striking force over Narvik, ten Swordfish under Captain Burch, R.M., ' fought their way ', as Captain Troubridge has it, ' through the narrows into Ofot Fjord with a ceiling of 500 ft. and snow squalls that occasionally reduced visibility to a few yards '. As they came to the open fjord, the weather improved, and they arrived at exactly the proper moment. They dived from 2,000 ft. to drop their bombs at 900 ft.—about 100 bombs, of which one in three were 250-pounders, and the rest 20-pounders. They claimed two hits with the large bombs on German destroyers outside Narvik at the cost of two aircraft.[1]

The British destroyers then divided, some going into Narvik harbour, while others chased the enemy up Rombaks Fjord. The *Cossack*, followed later by the *Foxhound* and *Kimberley*, went inside the harbour, where there remained only the crippled *Diether von Roeder*, which they sank after a short but fierce exchange of fire, but not before she had obtained four hits on the *Cossack*, one in No. 2 boiler room cutting the main steam pipe and severing the telemotor leads. Unable to manœuvre, the *Cossack* went aground 50 yards south of the lighthouse at the entrance ; there she remained till 0315 next morning.[2]

The *Foxhound* stopped to rescue survivors from the *Erich Giese*, which lay burning outside the harbour, and the *Kimberley* then joined the other part of the flotilla. The *Eskimo* had seen the Germans make off into Rombaks Fjord, so went after them with the *Forester* and *Hero*, followed by the *Bedouin* and *Icarus*. Five miles in, the fjord narrows to a neck only a quarter of a mile across, opening beyond the neck, but still in places only half a mile wide. The British ships went up the fjord through a smoke cloud laid by the retreating enemy, the *Warspite*'s aircraft keeping them posted about the German destroyers' movements. The leading ships entered the inner fjord, where they sighted and engaged two of the last four German warships afloat in the area ; one of them, the *Georg Thiele*, turned to fire her remaining torpedoes, and in doing so ran on shore, disabled, at Sildvika, three miles or so beyond the neck of the fjord ; but one of her torpedoes struck the *Eskimo* right forward, blowing off her forecastle as far as abaft ' A ' gun. Her ' B ' gun's crew, though badly shaken by the explosion, ' magnificently continued firing as if nothing had happened. It looked as if the *Eskimo* would sink immediately '.[3] The *Eskimo* fired her last torpedo, which missed, and then steamed stern first back through the narrows till the wreckage of her bow struck the bottom and brought the ship up. The *Forester* stayed by her, while the *Hero* and *Icarus*, joined by the *Kimberley*, which had come round from Narvik, went on to the head of the fjord.

There, a mile or two beyond Sildvika, they found the last three German destroyers. All seemed deserted, and after a few rounds had been fired to make sure, the survivors of their crews were seen wending their way up the valley. One destroyer, which proved to be the *Hans Lüdemann*, was on an even keel, and the *Hero* and *Icarus* sent armed whalers to examine her. As they approached, another slowly turned over and sank, revealing the third scuttled and aground inshore of her. The whalers took possession of the *Lüdemann* and the white

[1] The German narrative states that none of the destroyers received a direct hit ; bombs fell very near the *Hermann Künne*, and the *Bernd Von Arnim*, but did very little damage.

[2] Vice-Admiral Whitworth's report stated that the *Cossack* drifted on to a submerged wreck, but there is no mention of this in the *Cossack*'s detailed report of the incident.

[3] Report of Commanding Officer, H.M.S. *Forester*.

ensign was hoisted above the Nazi flag ; she was 'resting on the bottom, upright, with the engine room flooded. There was a fierce fire burning in the tiller flat and it appeared the depth charges might explode any moment '.[1] A swift search for secret matter proved fruitless ; all that was found was a mass of charred papers, still burning, on the bridge.

When these last two actions began, the *Warspite* was about 5 miles west of Narvik, slowly following the destroyers, and firing at what seemed at first to be a battery on shore, but proved to be the destroyer alongside in the harbour. The Admiral ceased fire when the *Cossack* and her consorts went inside, and lay off the entrance until that fight was finished. Then he went into the outer part of Rombaks Fjord and ordered all the destroyers available to concentrate in the fjord. This was about the time of the *Eskimo*'s torpedoing and her retreat stern first through the narrows, leaving little room for other ships. The *Hero* and *Icarus* went on through, as we have seen ; so did the *Bedouin*, which then reported, at 1520, ' one aground out of action, two more round the corner out of sight (there were actually three). If they have torpedoes, they are in a position of great advantage. *Hero* and *Bedouin*, ammunition almost exhausted. *Bedouin*, ' A ' mounting out of action '. On this the Admiral ordered the *Bedouin* out to close him, and when she came in sight he told her to arrange a fresh attack, ' sending most serviceable destroyer first : ram or board if necessary '. Accordingly, the *Bedouin* went in again, stern first this time, as she had four guns aft, but only two fit for action forward. She joined the *Hero*, *Icarus* and *Kimberley* at the head of the fjord about 1630, and ordered the torpedoing of the *Hans Lüdemann* which, although on shore, still remained upright. As soon as the Prize Crew had been taken off and the White Ensign hauled down, a torpedo was fired at her which broke her back and set her on fire forward. ' Had these four enemy destroyers ', remarks Commander Biggs of the *Hero*, ' been determined to make one last stand in the farthest end of the inner Rombaks Fjord, and had they been resolutely commanded, it might well have been an expensive business to destroy them, as not more than two of our ships under way could have operated against them at any time '.[2]

Thus ended the second Battle of Narvik. The risks of running the enemy to earth in the confined waters of the fjords had been correctly assessed and boldly accepted, and the result proved an outstanding success. The Germans lost their eight remaining destroyers and the U-boat (*U.64*) sunk by the *Warspite*'s aircraft ; their garrison at Narvik was for the time being virtually isolated, and, moreover, the British squadron had found no sign of serious defences established on shore.

The *Warspite* then returned off Narvik. Finding it quiet there at 1730, except for a mild exchange of fire between the grounded *Cossack* and a small gun or two on shore, Admiral Whitworth ' considered the landing of a party to occupy the town, as the opposition had apparently been silenced '. But, his report goes on, ' with the force available only a small party could be landed, and to guard against the inevitable counter-attack, it would be necessary to keep the force concentrated, close to the water front, and to provide strong covering gunfire : in fact, I considered it would be necessary to keep *Warspite* off Narvik '. Then a German officer taken prisoner by the *Foxhound* spoke of submarines in the fjords, and German aircraft appeared, a dozen coming in sight at 1800. ' Apart from the above conditions, I felt that to place, at the end of a long and strenuous day, a party of less than 200 tired seamen and

[1] Report of Commanding Officer, H.M.S. *Hero*.

[2] According to German sources their destroyers had by that time expended all their ammunition.

marines in the midst of a force of not less than 2,000 professional German soldiers would be to court disaster, even allowing for the moral effect which the day's engagement must have had on the enemy. The cumulative effect of the roar of *Warspite*'s 15-in. guns reverberating down and around the high mountains of the fjord, the bursts and splashes of these great shells, the sight of their ships sinking and burning around them must have been terrifying . . . '

That moral effect would not last. To take full advantage of it ' would have required a trained organised military force, ready to land directly the naval engagement had ceased. If such a force had been present, I believe that they would have succeeded in establishing themselves so strongly in Narvik that its eventual capture would only be a matter of time and reinforcements. I thereupon decided against keeping *Warspite* stopped in the fjord off Narvik, subject to submarine and air attack '. Admiral Whitworth started down the fjord accordingly with the *Warspite* and most of his destroyers about 1830, leaving one or two ships to stand by the injured *Eskimo* in Rombaks Fjord and *Cossack* in Narvik ; but hearing there were wounded men in the ships left behind, he soon turned back that they might come on board the *Warspite*, and this took up the rest of the night.[1]

Meanwhile, A.T. 2115/13 had urged on Sir Charles Forbes the ' occupation of town of Narvik to ensure unopposed landing later '. Whether this signal reached Admiral Whitworth does not appear in his report. However, knowing that a regular expedition was on its way to Vaags Fjord, the outer approach to Narvik from the northward, and thinking this expedition might be diverted direct to Narvik, he made this signal to the Commander-in-Chief and the Admiralty (2210/13) :—

> ' My impression is that enemy forces in Narvik were thoroughly frightened as a result of today's action, and that the presence of *Warspite* was the chief cause of this. I recommend that the town be occupied without delay by the main landing force.
>
> I intend to visit Narvik again tomorrow, Sunday (14th), in order to maintain the moral effect of the presence of *Warspite*, and to accept the air and submarine menace involved by this course of action.'

Next day the Admiralty asked for an account of the German strength at Narvik, to which Admiral Whitworth answered (1027/14) :—

> ' Your 0913. Information from Norwegian sources estimates 1,500 to 2,000 troops in Narvik. German naval officer prisoner states that there are many more than this, but I think this statement was made with intent to deceive. He also states that guns on shore are being positioned with the main object of opposing a landing, but *Cossack*, aground in Narvik Bay for 12 hours yesterday, was not seriously molested.
>
> My 2210/13. I am convinced that Narvik can be taken by direct assault without fear of meeting serious opposition on landing. I consider that the main landing force need only be small, but it must have the support of Force B (his present squadron) or one of similar composition : a special requirement being ships and destroyers with the best available A.A. armaments.'

That morning, the 14th, the squadron went out into Vest Fjord, leaving the *Ivanhoe* (which had joined from Skjel Fjord the evening before) and the *Kimberley* for the time being at Narvik, with orders to prevent the discharge of cargo, which might include stores and munitions for the German garrison, from several merchantmen, some of them German, which had been left afloat

[1] German aircraft attacked the *Ivanhoe*, which was patrolling near Baroy Island after a search by the Skjel Fjord destroyers for the submarine sighted in the morning by the *Eskimo*, but they did not molest the *Warspite* and ships in her company. The *Foxhound* encountered a submarine off Hamnesholm as the squadron steered westward down the fjord in the evening.

there in the hope of our being able soon to carry them off as prizes. If necessary they were to be sunk ; but both destroyers had to leave the port that day, the *Ivanhoe* going to hunt a submarine reported in Vaags Fjord, and there the matter stood.[1]

The *Cossack, Eskimo* and *Punjabi* went to Skjel Fjord for repairs before going home ; the rest of the squadron stayed in Vest Fjord to meet Lord Cork and to be ' ready to operate against Narvik when required ' says Admiral Whitworth. However, the time for that was not yet come, and on the 15th he took the *Warspite* out, and met the Commander-in-Chief in the evening when a redistribution of destroyers was effected ; he then cruised to the westward of Skomvaer Light, having orders from Sir Charles Forbes to keep outside Vest Fjord, ' unless required for an operation '. He had three destroyers[2] with the *Warspite* and six working in Vest Fjord, while by this time others had arrived with the expedition.

The Commander-in-Chief himself departed for Scapa the same evening (15th) with the *Rodney, Renown* and six destroyers,[3] the *Furious* having gone north the day before to oil at Tromsö, carrying out an air reconnaissance of the northern approaches to Narvik on the way.

19. Cruiser operations, 10th–14th April [PLANS 3, 4, 5

While the operations off the coast of Norway described in the foregoing sections were taking place, the ships of the 2nd and 18th[4] cruiser squadrons which had returned to Scapa on 10th April had not been idle.

At 0134, 11th April, Vice-Admiral Layton received orders to detail a cruiser to take General Mackesy and an advance party to the Narvik area. He had already been warned by telephone from the Admiralty that his force would probably be required to cover an expedition to Narvik, and at 1032 (11th) orders arrived from the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, requesting him to organise a force of two cruisers and six destroyers[5] to operate in the south part of the Indreled, sweeping northward along the coast from Aalesund.

Various conferences with General Mackesy, the Commanding Officers and others concerned, were held by Admiral Layton on the 11th and 12th while the ships completed fuelling, ammunitioning and making good defects. The *Glasgow* (Captain Pegram, Senior Officer) and *Sheffield*, with the *Somali, Mashona, Afridi, Sikh, Matabele* and *Mohawk* sailed for the inshore operation at 2000, 11th ; and next day, as already mentioned (*see* Sec. 17), Admiral Layton sailed with the *Manchester* and *Birmingham* to meet convoy N.P.I, the *Southampton*, screened by the *Electra* and *Escapade*, with General Mackesy and the advance party having left a few hours previously for Vaagsfjord, where she arrived without incident on the 14th.

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[1] The *Ivanhoe* and *Kimberley* went home with the Commander-in-Chief the following day.

[2] *Hostile, Havock, Foxhound.*

[3] *Esk, Ivanhoe, Forester, Icarus, Kimberley.*

[4] *Galatea* (Flag, Vice-Admiral Edward-Collins), *Arethusa, Aurora ; Manchester* (Flag, Vice-Admiral Layton), *Birmingham, Southampton, Glasgow, Sheffield.*

[5] This latter order caused considerable embarrassment to Rear-Admiral (D), who found it quite impossible to provide another force of six destroyers in addition to those already earmarked for Admiral Layton's force and a relief screen for the battleships which would be required shortly. Verbal approval was obtained by telephone from the Admiralty to use some of the former, as extra destroyers from the Western Approaches Command were accompanying the troop convoy.

Admiral Layton fell in with the troop convoy[1] off Cape Wrath at 1900, 13th April, and shaped course for Vest Fjord at 14 knots, being joined by the *Valiant* sent by the Commander-in-Chief, the *Vindictive* and three destroyers[2] from Scapa and three destroyers[3] from Sollum Voe next afternoon. The passage was uneventful, but at 1907/14th orders were received from the Admiralty diverting the troops in the *Chrobry* and *Empress of Australia* to Namsos. They were then in position 68° 10′ N., 10° 20′ E. (approximately 130 miles from Vaagsfjord). The convoy therefore divided, Admiral Layton with *Manchester, Birmingham, Cairo, Vanoc, Whirlwind, Highlander,* taking the Namsos detachment, and the remainder, with the *Valiant,* and 10 destroyers continuing for Vaagsfjord. Their further proceedings will be dealt with later.

At just about the time the convoy split, the first British landing on Norwegian soil was taking place. This was by an advance party from the *Glasgow* and *Sheffield* at Namsos (Operation Henry). Captain Pegram's force had arrived off Stadtlandet in the afternoon of the 12th and swept to the northward along the coast of Aalesund. Further north, Vice-Admiral Cunningham's force[4] had reported Namsos and the neighbouring fjords clear on the 12th and then proceeded to rejoin the Commander-in-Chief off the Lofoten Islands. Meanwhile enemy reports from aircraft on the 12th had reported a pocket battleship, a cruiser and many merchant ships on Captain Pegram's station : these he was searching for early on the 13th when he intercepted a signal from the Admiralty to the Commander-in-Chief (A.T.0216/13) proposing a landing from his two cruisers at Namsos in order to forestall the Germans.[5] Later that day he received orders to carry out this plan. His destroyers, however, which he had sent to Aalesund after the ' many large merchant vessels ' (which turned out to be Norwegian) were delayed there, and the parties could not be landed till the evening of the 14th, after which the *Glasgow, Sheffield* and three destroyers cruised in the offing off Kya Light, subsequently joining Admiral Layton. Captain Nicholson (Captain D.6) with three destroyers remained at Namsos to arrange for the landing of the expedition on its way there and to meet General Carton de Wiart, V.C., the Military Commander, who was arriving by air.

Meanwhile Vice-Admiral Edward-Collins had received orders from the Admiralty at 1355, 11th April, to send one ship to Rosyth to hoist the flag of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Cork.[6] He chose the *Aurora ;* she left Scapa at 1700 that day, embarked Lord Cork the next forenoon and sailed again at 1200, arriving, after an uneventful passage, at Skjel Fjord on the 14th. Admiral Edward-Collins left Scapa with the *Galatea* and *Arethusa* at 1300, 13th April, for Rosyth, to embark troops for a landing at Namsos (Operation Maurice). Brigadier Morgan and the battalions of the first flights embarked in the two cruisers and the transport *Orion* on the 14th, but delays in embarking a battery of A.A. guns in the latter delayed their sailing. That evening the instructions were given to divert part of Admiral Layton's convoy to Namsos, and Admiral Edward-Collins' force remained at Rosyth till the 17th when it sailed for Aandalsnes[7] (Operation Sickle).

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[1] S.S. *Empress of Australia, Monarch of Bermuda, Reina del Pacifico, Batory, Chrobry, Protector,* escorted by the *Cairo, Witherington, Volunteer, Vanoc, Whirlwind, Highlander.*

[2] *Codrington* (Captain D.1), S.O., Escort, *Acasta, Ardent.*

[3] *Fearless, Griffin, Brazen.*

[4] *See* Sec. 15 *ante.*

[5] *See* Sec. 31 *postea.*

[6] The *Effingham* and *Enterprise* were to be sailed from Portsmouth to Narvik as soon as possible when Lord Cork was to transfer his flag to the *Effingham,* and the *Aurora* was to rejoin the 2nd C.S. Actually the *Aurora* remained with Lord Cork for some time longer.

[7] *See* Sec. 37 *postea.*

While these steps were being taken in the effort to retrieve the situation in Norway, possible repercussions from the occupation of Denmark had to be considered, and it was decided to lose no time in making sure of the Faeroes. H.M.S. *Suffolk* (Captain Durnford) had just completed repairs at Govan when the invasion occurred. She accordingly embarked a force of 250 Royal Marines with two 3·7-in. howitzers at Greenock on 12th April, and sailed that night at high speed for Thorshavn, arriving there next afternoon whither she had been preceded by the destroyers *Hesperus* and *Havant*, which had carried out an anti-submarine search in the vicinity. With the assistance of a couple of trawlers, the *Northern Sky* and *Northern Foam*, all personnel and stores were landed by 2130 on the 13th and the *Suffolk* then sailed for Vest Fjord to join Vice-Admiral Cunningham. Next forenoon, being then in 64° 5′ N., 2° E., she fell in with the German tanker *Skagerrak*, which was scuttled by her crew to avoid capture. The *Suffolk* then continued on her way to the Lofotens, but that evening she was recalled by the Admiralty (A.T. 1935/14) to Scapa to prepare for a bombarding operation (Operation Duck) in support of the projected landing at Aandalsnes.

Meanwhile Vice-Admiral Cunningham, with the *Devonshire* and *Berwick* had been covering his four destroyers[1] while they searched fjords from Trondheim to the northward during the 11th and 12th April. No enemy was encountered, but the *Isis* met the Norwegian gunboat *Nordkap* in Aluangen (66° 3′ N., 12° 55′ E.) who informed her that she had sunk a German tanker.[2]

At 1530, 12th, the destroyers rejoined the cruisers in approximately 66° 30′ N., 11° 30′ E., and the force then steered for the possible enemy rendezvous between 4° 30′ E., and 6° E. in 67° N. as given in A.T. 1607/11,[3] afterwards rejoining the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, at 0930, 13th April off the Lofoten Islands. The destroyers were then sent to Skjel Fjord to fuel, and the cruisers remained with the flag till that afternoon, when they were again detached, this time to investigate conditions at Tromsö (Commander-in-Chief, H.F. 1717/13) being joined by the same four destroyers at 0700, 14th, in 69° 30′ N., 16° 05′ E.

Admiral Cunningham sent the *Berwick* with the *Inglefield* and *Imogen* to examine Ands Fjord, Vaags Fjord and various inlets in the neighbourhood of the proposed landing place of the Narvik expedition, while he himself in the *Devonshire* with the other two destroyers proceeded to Tromsö, where he arrived at 1500, 14th. There he made contact with the British Vice-Consul,[4] the Norwegian S.N.O., Captain Bredsdorff, and the G.O.C. of the district, General Fleischer. From them he learned that the situation there was quiet, and that the Norwegian authorities were confident of their ability to repel any German attempt to land from captured fishing boats or small craft ; also that considerable quantities of oil fuel were available in the port. After making various arrangements, such as the broadcasting of enemy reports, Admiral Cunningham sailed with the *Isis* and *Ilex*[5] that evening for Kirkenes, in compliance with orders from the Commander-in-Chief (C.-in-C. 1716/14), being joined early next morning (15th April) by the *Berwick* and *Inglefield* off North Cape. The

[1] *Inglefield, Imogen, Isis, Ilex.* *See* Sec. 15 *ante.*

[2] The *Kattegat.*

[3] *See* Sec. 15 *ante.*

[4] Lieut.-Commander Cumming, D.S.C., R.N. (ret.).

[5] The *Isis* and *Ilex* were detached at 0100, 15th, to rendezvous with the *Furious* which was on her way to Tromsö.

Force arrived at Kirkenes[1] at 1600 that afternoon, sailing for Tromsö the same evening as cover for a Norwegian troop convoy ; a second convoy was escorted by the *Imogen* a couple of days later.

Admiral Cunningham remained in these northern waters, based on Tromsö, cooperating with the Norwegian authorities, and working with the *Furious* in operations in connection with the arrival of the Narvik Expeditionary Force (Rupert), until the 19th April, when he sailed for Scapa (in response to an urgent signal from the Commander-in-Chief) with the *Berwick* and *Inglefield.*

20. Submarine activities,[2] 4th–14th April 1940 [PLANS 7, 8

While the focus of the Allied naval effort had thus been moving to the north, the southern area had not been entirely neglected. As already mentioned (*see* Sec. 12) the weight of the German air attacks on the Home Fleet in the afternoon of 9th April[3] had convinced the Commander-in-Chief of the impossibility of operating surface forces off the southern coasts of Norway without incurring very serious losses. It was therefore left to the Allied submarines to do what they could against the German sea communications with the southern ports. And fine work they did, though it was impossible for them unaided to cut the seaborne pipeline from Germany across the narrow waters of the Skaw and Skagerrak to Norway.

Special submarine dispositions had been ordered on 4th April, with the object of covering the ports involved in the operations under Plan R.4, should they be ordered, and on the night of 8th April they were disposed as follows :—

3 in the Kattegat, *Sealion, Sunfish, Triton.*
2 in the Skagerrak, *Trident,* O.R.P. *Orzel.*
1 entering Skagerak, *Truant.*
1 south-west of Skagerrak, 56° N., 6° E., *Seal.*
3 off west coast of Denmark, *Spearfish, Snapper, Unity.*
2 East of Dogger Bank, French *Amazone, Antiope.*
6 on passage from the United Kingdom to the eastward, *Severn, Tarpon, Clyde, Thistle, Shark, Seawolf.*

As a result of the reports on 7th and 8th April of the German fleet being at sea the Admiralty in the afternoon of the 8th, after discussion with the Admiral, Submarines (Vice-Admiral Sir Max Horton) had ordered fresh dispositions designed to intercept the enemy heavy ships, with the result that by the morning of the 9th the submarines were moving to cover the approaches to the German ports in the Heligoland Bight, leaving the Norwegian ports somewhat neglected. Admiral Horton, however, had for some time been convinced that the invasion of Norway by the Germans was imminent—an opinion confirmed by the sinking of the *Rio de Janeiro* on the 8th[4], and in his original orders, timed 1931, 4th April, had laid down that if warships and transports were encountered the latter were to be taken as the primary objective. This instruction was allowed to stand ; and at 1324 the next day,

[1] The situation at Kirkenes was complicated by uncertainty as to the Russian intentions : this made the Norwegians reluctant to denude their north-eastern frontier of troops.

[2] These are fully dealt with in Naval Staff History, Submarines.

[3] It has been remarked that had the German aircraft which then attacked been armed with torpedoes and pressed home their attacks the fate of the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* might have been anticipated by some 18 months by the *Rodney* and *Valiant.*

[4] The report of this had been received before Admiral Horton's visit to the Admiralty that afternoon.

9th April, he signalled to the submarines that German merchant ships encountered in the Skagerrak east of 8° E. and in the area to the eastward of the German declared area should be treated as warships and sunk without warning.[1]

Actually, the submarines had already taken a hand in the game as evidenced by the sinking of the *Rio de Janeiro* by the *Orzel* on the 8th. This was followed up the same afternoon by the sinking of the tanker *Posidonia*[2] (on her maiden voyage) in the mouth of Oslo Fjord by the *Trident*. That night several submarines encountered enemy squadrons and convoys coming out of the Baltic, though no successes were scored ; but on 9th April the *Truant* sank the *Karlsruhe* off Kristiansand (*see* Sec. 12 *ante*) and on the night of the 10th/11th the *Spearfish* seriously damaged the *Lutzow*[3] with a snap shot on the surface off the Skaw. During the first week of the operations (8th–14th April), besides the ships mentioned above, seven other transports and merchant ships were sunk in the Skagerrak or Kattegat—four by the *Sunfish* and one each by the *Triad*, *Sealion* and *Snapper*, while the *Triton* made four hits on a convoy, though severe depth-charge attacks prevented her from observing the results.

These successes were not gained without loss. On 10th April the *Thistle*, which had unsuccessfully attacked a U-boat the day before, was off Stavanger and her Commanding Officer reported his intention of attempting to enter the harbour. Nothing further was heard of her ; it is now known that she was sunk by *U.4*. This loss was followed by the sinking by German A/S craft of the *Tarpon* off the west coast of Denmark[4] on the 14th.

The Germans, too, had made special submarine dispositions to cover their landing operations. Practically the whole of their available operational submarines were employed. Indeed, the almost total cessation of U-boat attacks on the Atlantic trade routes was one of the earliest indications that some large-scale operation was brewing elsewhere. They were disposed as follows :—

(A) *Off Norwegian Ports*
Narvik, 4 in Vest Fjord.
Trondheim, 2 (inner approaches).
Bergen, 4 (2 for each main entrance).
1 to cover Haugesund.

(B) *Attack Groups*
N.E. of Shetlands, 6.
East of Orkneys, 3 (small).
East and west of Pentland Firth, 4 (small).
West of the Naze, 3 (small).
In eastern part of English Channel, 3.

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[1] Hitherto submarines had been forbidden to sink merchant ships without ensuring the safety of their crews in accordance with international law. The decision to remove this ban in the area referred to was reached by the Cabinet on 9th April. The ' German declared area ' was bounded by lines passing through positions (*a*) 53° 36 N. 4° 25′ E., (*b*) 53° 36′ N. 6° 2′ E., (*c*) 56° 30′ N. 6° 2′ E., (*d*) 56° 30′ N. 4° 25′ E. On 11th April the ban was further relaxed to include ' any ships, merchant or otherwise, under way within 10 miles of the Norwegian coast south of 61° N. and anywhere east of 6° E. as far south as 54° N. to be attacked on sight. Ships at anchor may be attacked if identified as enemy.' (V.A.S. 1956/11.)

[2] *Posidonia* (8100 gr. tons) was taken over by O.K.M. and renamed *Stedingen*. She was to have acted as a supply ship for Kristiansand (south) and for U-boats.

[3] The *Lutzow* was so seriously damaged by the torpedo, and later grounding in the Kattegat on her way home, that she was out of action for 12 months.

[4] 56° 45.5′ N. 8° 15′ E.

In contradistinction to the success of the British submarines, the German U-boats achieved practically nothing, only succeeding during the whole of April in sinking three British and two neutral merchant ships and one store transport (the *Cedar Bank*). When at an early stage in the operations (15th April) their disposition fell into the hands of the British,[1] the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, expressed satisfaction that such an effort should have accomplished so little. It is now known that their torpedoes suffered from serious technical defects.[2] But for this fortunate circumstance, the story might have been different. Actually, many attacks were made by experienced submarine commanders—but without result. On this subject Admiral Doenitz, then Flag Officer, Submarines, waxed bitter. An entry in his War Diary (15th May 1940) reads :—

> 'I do not believe that ever in the history of war men have been sent against the enemy with such a useless weapon.'

21. General situation, 15th April 1940 [PLAN 6

Vice-Admiral Whitworth's attack at Narvik and the operations described in the foregoing sections marked the conclusion of the first phase of the campaign. Hitherto the chief naval interest had centred on attempts to bring to action the German naval forces and to blockade the detachments in Norwegian ports. From this time onwards it lay in convoying and maintaining the hastily improvised expeditions which the Allies were sending to the succour of the Norwegians, and in inshore operations in support of the troops when landed. Before following the fortunes of these expeditions the first of which were just arriving in Norwegian waters, however, it will be convenient to take stock of the general situation at the conclusion of the first phase as it existed in the evening of 15th April.

In the northern area Vice-Admiral Whitworth was cruising off the Lofoten Islands in the *Warspite*, standing by to support the operations against Narvik of the expedition which had arrived with the *Valiant* and escort at Vaags Fjord that day. The *Valiant* remained in Vaags Fjord on patrol till 1900, 15th, when she sailed for Scapa, screened by three destroyers.[3] On the same day Admiral of the Fleet Lord Cork, wearing his flag in the *Aurora*, met General Mackesy for the first time in Vaags Fjord, who had arrived there in the *Southampton* the previous day.

Vice-Admiral Cunningham, with the *Devonshire*, *Berwick* and *Furious* was operating in the Tromsö area.

The Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, having remained cruising off the Lofoten Islands during the 14th and met Vice-Admiral Whitworth off Skomvaer next day, shaped course to the southward in the evening of the 15th with the *Rodney* and *Renown*, arriving at Scapa on the 17th. Since the 14th, he had been exchanging signals with the Admiralty on the possibility of a frontal attack on Trondheim, to discuss which Rear-Admiral Holland, who had been studying the problem in London, was proceeding to Scapa to meet him. This proposal will be dealt with in the next chapter, but it was already giving the Commander-in-Chief much to consider.

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[1] *See* Sec. 45 *postea*.

[2] The torpedoes suffered in two respects :—

(*a*) The depth-keeping gear was defective and caused many misses.

(*b*) The magnetic pistols were adversely affected by the proximity of the magnetic pole in the high latitudes and frequently failed to detonate.

[3] *Fearless*, *Griffin*, *Brazen*.

In the central area (Trondheim) Vice-Admiral Layton with the *Manchester, Birmingham, Cairo,* three destroyers and two transports was nearing Lillesjona, where he had been directed to transfer the troops to destroyers for passage to Namsos, temporarily occupied the day before by parties landed from the *Glasgow* and *Sheffield,* which remained cruising in the offing. Major-General Carton de Wiart, V.C., the military commander in this area, arrived in a flying boat at Namsos on the 15th, where Captain Nicholson in the *Somali* was awaiting him to discuss landing arrangements.

A landing party drawn from the *Hood, Nelson* and *Barham,* then in dockyard hands, had sailed from Rosyth in four sloops, the *Black Swan, Bittern, Flamingo* and *Auckland,* on the 14th and was storm-bound at Invergordon on its way to Aandalsnes (south of Trondheim). The *Suffolk,* on her way to join Admiral Cunningham in the Lofoten Islands, after landing the party in the Faeroes, had been recalled by the Admiralty to prepare for a bombarding operation in support of this landing, and arrived at Scapa in the evening of the 15th.

At Rosyth, Vice-Admiral Edward-Collins was embarking the second flight for Namsos—to be diverted next day to Aandalsnes—in the cruisers *Galatea* and *Arethusa* and the transport *Orion.*

Further afield, Vice-Admiral Wells (V.A.(A)) had been ordered to join the Home Fleet from the Mediterranean in the carrier *Glorious* and had left Gibraltar in the evening of the 14th ; his usual flagship, the *Ark Royal* (soon to follow), was ordered to remain at Gibraltar for the time being.

Turning to the enemy, the situation was as follows. Their initial landings had gone almost exactly as planned. Their naval losses had been severe, but not higher than anticipated though the loss of Commodore Bonte's ten destroyers at Narvik had been a bitter blow[1]—and their surviving main units were by this time all back in German ports.

The initial supply arrangements for the assault forces at the two northern ports,[2] however, had virtually broken down ; only one out of the six camouflaged steamers which were to meet the landing parties on arrival reaching her destination. The *Rauenfels* with ammunition for Narvik had been blown up on 10th April, the *Alster* with mechanical transport had been captured, and the *Barenfels,* after being diverted to Bergen, was sunk there while discharging her cargo for Narvik by air attack on the 14th. Of the Trondheim group, the *Sao Paulo* was sunk by mine off Bergen and the *Main* by a Norwegian destroyer ; the third ship, the *Levante,* eventually reached Trondheim on the 12th, three days late. Yet another supply ship had been sunk at Stavanger by the Norwegian torpedo boat *Sleipner*[3] on the 9th.

The tankers, too, had been unfortunate, only the *Jan Wellem* from Murmansk reaching Narvik as planned, the other two, the *Kattegat* for Narvik and the *Skaggerak* for Trondheim, having both been scuttled by their crews to avoid capture.

' The expectation of the Army and the Air Force to be supplied in time with guns, ammunition, equipment and provisions for the troops that had been landed in the northern harbours was therefore frustrated.'[4]

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[1] ' Ten of our modern destroyers, half of our destroyer fleet, are lying shot to bits, damaged or sunk in Ofot and Rombakenfjord.'—German Naval Staff War Diary.

[2] *See* Sec. 1 *ante.*

[3] *Sleipner,* 3—3·9-in. ; 1–1·57 A/A guns ; 2—21-in. torpedo tubes.

[4] B.R. 1840 (1) The German Campaign in Norway.

The German detachments in these two areas (Narvik and Trondheim) thus found themselves in a highly critical position until these deficiencies could be made good. The fate of their destroyers at Narvik, which had been unable to leave for want of fuel, left no doubt as to this. Intercepted Allied signals on 12th April had revealed the probability of an Allied landing at Namsos, and later messages indicated that another landing was impending at Vaags Fjord on the 15th. From the German point of view the fate of Narvik depended on holding the Trondheim area ; ' the pivot of all operations was therefore Trondheim '[1] and the following directions were accordingly issued on the 14th.

(*a*) The Army (Group XXI) was to reinforce the garrison at Trondheim as soon as possible, taking possession of the railway Oslo–Dombaas and Aandalsnes.

(*b*) The Navy was to concentrate U-boats in the waters round Trondheim and Aalesund, and to arrange for the transport of the most important supplies by U-boats[2] to Trondheim.

(*c*) The Luftwaffe[3] to destroy enemy troops already landed ; to prevent further landings in the Aandalsnes area ; to occupy Dombaas with paratroops and to send airborne reinforcements to Trondheim.

Meanwhile, in the south, the follow-up troops and stores had arrived at their destinations between 9th and 12th April in the 1st Transport Division[4]—the ships sailing singly in disguise—more or less as planned. Losses[5] had occurred, from accident and enemy submarine attack, but not on a scale sufficient to cause serious interruption.

The 2nd Transport Division, sailing in convoy, lost two ships and a patrol vessel[6] to British submarines north of Gotenberg, but the remaining nine transports reached Oslo on the 12th ; 900 troops, however, had been drowned and in future the passage of troops was restricted to fast warships and small craft using the shortest route between Jutland and the southern Norwegian ports. The 3rd Transport Division, 12 steamers carrying Army supplies, left home ports on the 13th and, sailing in five independent groups, arrived at Oslo 15th–16th April after losing two ships.[7] Thereafter the build-up proceeded steadily, the number of troops transported from Frederikshavn and Aalborg to Larvik and Oslo being about 3000 a day.[8]

On shore the German troops were advancing from Oslo up the railway lines leading to Trondheim through Lillehammer and Dombaas in the west and

[1] B.R. 1840 (1) The German Campaign in Norway.

[2] Several U-boats had been earmarked for this duty since the 10th. Within a week three sailed, each carrying 40 to 50 tons of small arms and A.A. ammunition.

[3] Luftflotte 5 for the conduct of all operations in Norway had been formed under the command of Colonel-General Milch on 12th April, and was operating from airfields near Trondheim, Stavanger and Kristiansand (south) in Norway, Aalborg in Denmark, Westerland in Sylt (Frisian Islands) and Lubeck and Luneberg in Northern Germany.

[4] *See* Sec. 1 *ante*.

[5] *Curityba* ran aground north of Helsingborg, 7th April ; arrived Oslo, 10th. *Rio de Janeiro, Antares* and *Jonia* sunk by submarines.

[6] *Friedenau, Wigbert,* Patrol Vessel *1507*.

[7] *Florida* sunk by submarine in Kattegat ; *Urundi* ran aground in Leads west of Faerdor.

[8] B.R. 1840(1) gives the following statistics of transportation (other than by warships) for the Norwegian campaign. 270 ships and 100 trawlers, totalling 1,192,000 g.r.t., carried up to 15th June :—

107,581 officers and men.
16,102 horses.
20,339 vehicles.
109,400 tons of supplies.

Of the above, 21 ships totalling 111,700 g.r.t. were lost, and of the 4344 officers and men in these ships, about 1000 were lost : a large part of their cargoes was salved.

through Kongsvinger, Elverum and Roros in the east. By 15th April the heads of their columns had reached Strandlökka near the southern end of Lake Mjösa and the western outskirts of Kongsvinger.

The Norwegian Army which numbered no more than six divisions, one of which was stationed in the extreme north, never had a chance to carry out an ordered mobilisation.[1] But by this time detachments were assembled at Storen and Steinkjaer in the Trondheim area. General Ruge had been appointed Commander-in-Chief on the 10th, but in the general confusion and with scanty communications had been unable to establish effective control.

The King of Norway, with the Crown Prince and the Government, closely pursued and ruthessly bombed whenever their whereabouts became known to the enemy, had retreated north through Hamar, Elverum and Lillehamar, and had found a temporary resting place at Otta (south-east of Dombaas).

Hunted and harried though they were, so long as they remained at liberty, the German invasion was doomed to failure politically, whatever might be effected militarily by brute force. Already Quisling's attempt to form a government had proved abortive ; rejected by his fellow countrymen and discarded by the Germans, he had given way to an ' Administrative Council ' set up[2] (with the approval of the King) under the Lord Chief Justice of Norway as the Civil Authority in the parts of the country in German occupation, and soon to be replaced in its turn by the Reich Commissioner Terboven on 24th April.

On 26th April the German wireless announced—somewhat belatedly—that a state of war existed between Germany and Norway.

[1] General Erichsen commanding the 1st Division succeeded in mobilising to the south-east of Oslo but he was isolated from Norwegian Headquarters and entirely without A.A. guns or aircraft. After a week of fighting he was faced with the alternative of surrender or internment in Sweden. He chose the latter.

[2] 16th April.